

The McDowell Family of Fairbury, Illinois

by

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The McDowell Family of Fairbury, Illinois

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Foreword

James McDowell (1747-1809) was a soldier under General Wayne in the Revolutionary War and was wounded at Brandywine. He married Sarah Gorrell (1763-1834) and they had nine children. Families of three of these nine children moved from Ohio to Avoca Township in Illinois starting in 1832. Descendants of James and Sarah fought in the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

These McDowell family members were pioneers that helped establish the Illinois towns of Avoca, McDowell, Fairbury, and Gibson City. Some of the Fairbury, Illinois, McDowells named and helped to establish Fairbury, Nebraska.

Many of the organizations and public facilities in Fairbury, Illinois, can be traced to the generosity of the McDowells. Some of these include the Floyd & Marion Stafford pool, North Park, and the Fairbury Echoes Museum. Several homes built by the McDowells still stand in Fairbury.

This book documents the interesting pioneering lives of the McDowell family as they settled Central Illinois and Nebraska. It is hoped this book will help people understand the critical role the McDowell family played in early Illinois and Nebraska history.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Diane Pawlowski for the use of her 1963 pamphlet titled *Egress of the Old West* published by the Jefferson County Nebraska Historical Society. Diane also reviewed the content for the chapter on the Fairbury Echoes Museum.

The author would also like to thank the Fairbury Echoes Museum for allowing access to its many McDowell family related items.

Thanks also goes to Shana Kay Koehl for performing some of the McDowell family research used to write this book.

Many of the extremely rare photographs of Avoca Cemetery, the Avoca church, the Avoca bridge, McDowell homes, and various McDowell family portraits were provided by living descendants of William McDowell (1785-1834), who wish to remain anonymous. These same descendants provided invaluable genealogical information about the McDowell family.

Thanks also goes to Alexander Lumber for allowing the author to photograph the historic G.Y. McDowell safe.

Many thanks also go to Judith K. Wells for proofreading the manuscript.

The author also received the following note from the McDowell descendants.

"The direct descendants of William and Sarah Dever McDowell wish to thank Dale Maley for compiling the history of their McDowell family, pioneers of Avoca Township, Livingston Co., IL. Our heritage is in the Fairbury area, and 186 years later, we contributors take great pride in our McDowell families' humble beginnings along the south branch of the Vermilion River."

CHAPTER 1

Book Design

There are three primary historical reference books used whenever research is performed about Fairbury, Illinois, history.

1878 History Book

The earliest published reference to Fairbury, Illinois history is William Le Baron's 1878 book titled *The History of Livingston County, Illinois*. This book will be called the 1878 history book in future references.

1888 History Book

The 1888 history book titled *Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County* by Chapman Brothers is the second Fairbury, Illinois history book. This book will be called the 1888 history book in future references.

1909 History Book

The 1909 history book titled *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Livingston County* by Bateman and Selby is the third Fairbury, Illinois history book. This book will be called the 1909 history book in future references.

When the 1878 history book was written, the author, William Le Baron, had the luxury of being able to interview Judge Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904). The Judge, along with his brothers, accompanied their father William McDowell to Avoca Township in 1832. They were among the first settlers of the Fairbury area.

When Le Baron was writing his history book in 1878, Judge McDowell would have been 60 years old. As a result of Judge McDowell's availability, the 1878 history book is a cornucopia of McDowell family information. This family related information will be extracted from the 1878 history book, and will be used to introduce the reader to the McDowell family in the next chapter.

Other Important Historical Sources

In 1918, the Honorable John Hugh McDowell published a book titled ***History of The McDowells, Erwins, Irwins and Connections.*** This book includes information about the McDowell family that settled in the Fairbury, Illinois, area. This book has been scanned and converted into a word searchable PDF file available from Google Books. This book will be called the 1918 McDowell history book in future references.

The McDowell family helped to found the cities of Avoca, McDowell, Fairbury, and Gibson City, Illinois. Later, they also helped to found the city of Fairbury, Nebraska.

In 1963, the Jefferson County Historical Society published a booklet titled ***Egress of the Old West: The Beginning of Fairbury [Nebraska] and its Founders.*** This booklet includes information about how Judge Woodford G. McDowell and other McDowell family members helped to establish Fairbury, Nebraska.

In 1967, Alma Lewis James published the first edition of her book titled ***Stuffed Clubs and Antimacassars: Accounts and tales of early Fairbury, Illinois.*** Alma Lewis James was a Fairbury historian. She also published a revised edition of her book in 1977. Copies of her second edition are still available from the Echoes Museum in Fairbury, Illinois. Her book includes many references to the McDowell family between their arrival in 1832 until about 1900.

Alma Lewis James also went through old copies of the Fairbury Blade newspaper and clipped little snippets of Fairbury history. These snippets were later typed and called *Nicks from the Blade*. These Nicks include many references to the McDowell family.

The Fairbury Blade has now been digitized and is word searchable back to 1871. Access to the Blade archives is free and available from the Dominy Memorial Library website. There were also other newspapers published in Fairbury between its founding in 1857 and 1871. Unfortunately, no copies of these early newspapers exist.

The Bloomington Pantagraph newspaper archives are also available online and can be searched back to 1838. There is an annual subscription fee required to access these archives.

There were several McDowells from Fairbury that served in the Civil War. Their service history is included in the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois in the Civil War*.

If possible, references and dates will be noted for all materials used in this book. In some cases, exact dates are not available for some photographs.

Errors

The author has made every attempt to be as accurate as possible with the data used in this book. Some of this data came from Ancestry.com. The danger of using data from Ancestry.com is that it is often not verifiable to a source document.

The McDowells had many large families, and often re-used the same first and middle names. This makes it very challenging to keep straight the more than 250 names in the McDowell family tree used to write this book.

If an error is found, please notify the author. Please include a source document when you do notify the author. The manuscript will be updated to correct the error.

CHAPTER 2

McDowell Family History from the 1878 History Book

The 1878 Livingston County History Book by Wm. Le Baron, Jr., contains a lot of historical information about the McDowell family. The first reference to the McDowell family is shown below.

A PERIOD of time which would be considered remote in the records of the civilization of Central Illinois, would be regarded as recent in the annals of the Eastern or Southern States; and in the history of a county which, less than fifty years ago, was inhabited only by the aborigines, it will not be expected that an undue flavor of antiquity will pervade the pages; still, the pages of few histories, either ancient or modern, furnish more instructive lessons than are to be found in the record of the pluck, perseverance and success of the early settlers of this county.

The facts pertaining to the early settlement of the county have been gleaned from the few old pioneers who still survive; and the writer desires especially to acknowledge his indebtedness to Hon. Woodford G. McDowell, who came to the Territory and settled in what is now Livingston County, forty-six years ago, for much valuable information, without which it would have been impossible to record some of the most interesting facts and incidents in the history of the county.

[Note: Woodford G. McDowell (1818 - 1904) would have been 60 years old when he was interviewed for the 1878 history book.]

Of the colony which settled in Avoca Township, in the year 1832, Judge McDowell, his brothers John and James, and a sister, Mrs. Joel Tucker, still survive and are living in this county. It is fortunate for the historian that the colony reckoned the McDowell brothers among its numbers: for they were not only fully competent to do so, but did take a deep interest in preserving the more interesting details of the progress and development of the county.

The work of writing this history has been begun none too soon; as, by far, the greater number of early settlers have passed away; and age and decrepitude are clouding the memories of some of who remain; and, had the work been deferred for a few years, a considerable portion of the history would have been lost.

This work is not written for the purpose of recording panegyrics of any man or set of men; and, if an individual receives prominent mention, it is because his history is interwoven with the history of the county, in such a manner as to render it necessary.

So far as writing up the official and political portion of the work is concerned, care has been taken to follow the official records, so far as there were records to follow: but, beyond that, the writer has been forced to hunt his facts wherever he could find them throughout the county.

The second reference to the McDowell family occurs on page 233 of the 1878 History Book.

On the 5th day of May, 1832, William McDowell, from Scioto County, Ohio, with his five sons, John, Hiram, Woodford G., Joseph and James, and his two daughters, Betty and Hannah, settled in what is now Avoca Township, on the Little Vermilion. Their nearest white neighbor on the south was one Philip Cook: but they could call around on Frederick Rook, Isaac Jordan or William Popejoy, almost any time, by going a distance of from five to fifteen miles.

The elder McDowell displayed excellent judgment in selecting this location, for after forty-five years continual farming, the soil is still rich and productive.

The McDowell's at once proceeded to erect their cabin. The principal tool used in its construction was an axe. They brought with them a few panes of glass for a window, and, in this particular, they had the advantage of their neighbors. The boards which furnished the material for the door and window casing of this primitive dwelling, were purchased of the Kickapoo Indians, and were brought from

Oliver's Grove with an ox team. The Indians had hewn them out for some purpose of their own, but were induced to part with them for a small supply of ammunition.

The Black Hawk War was then in active operation, and this settlement was within a short march of the headquarters of this terrible chief. This same year, Wm. Popejoy, John Hanneman and Franklin Oliver located, and soon took an active part in the affairs of the settlement. Black Hawk maintained his position, and the situation of the settlers became alarming, as it was not known what attitude the Kickapoo Indians (numbering 630) at Oliver's Grove, would assume; and, on the 20th of May, they were waited upon by a deputation of whites for the purpose of ascertaining their intentions.

At this meeting, the venerable Franklin Oliver presided. On their return from the council, the members of the deputation stopped at the McDowell cabin and took dinner, and they advised the settlers either to abandon their homes or proceed to erect fortifications. The latter scheme was impracticable, for the reason that there were but two rifles in the whole settlement, and very little ammunition. On the 27th of May, all the white men in the settlement held a council, and it was then and there decided that the best thing that could be done, under the circumstances, was to retire to the white settlements in Indiana; and, on the evening of the 28th, the entire white population camped in and

around the McDowell cabin, preparatory to a march the next morning.

This company consisted of the McDowell family, and William Popejoy, Abner Johnson, Uriah Blue, Isaac Jordan and John Hanneman, and their families—thirty-one souls in all. In speaking of this party, Hon. Woodford G. McDowell, who was one of the number, says: " I feel sure, if the entire outfit had been required to raise twenty-five dollars among them, or be scalped by the Indians, they would have been compelled to throw up the sponge—they could not have raised the money."

On the morning of the 29th of May, the whole company of seven families, in six wagons, took up the line of march and left the embryo county in possession of the Indians. Darnall must have retreated some time previous, as his name is not mentioned in this exodus; and as far as Oliver is concerned, he came and went among the Indians at his own pleasure, and without fear of molestation. He thoroughly understood their character, and was accounted a favorite among them; and, in fact, an Indian chief was called after his name.

During the march to Indiana, several interesting incidents transpired. The more timid were in hourly anticipation of an attack from Black Hawk, and could scarcely be persuaded to regulate their pace with the ox teams which drew the women and children. On the second day of their march, the wife of Isaac Jordan presented him with an infant daughter; and James McDowell, then a young man of 17 years, together with another youth, walked to a grove of timber four miles distant to procure wood enough to build a camp fire. On their return, they found the camp in great commotion. A couple of Indians had been seen on a ridge overlooking the camp, and then to disappear in the tall grass. Women and children were crying, and even some of the men were badly frightened, and counseled an immediate flight, as they supposed the Indians they had seen were scouts sent out by Black Hawk. Others were less excited, and proceeded to light the camp fire and prepare their supper, the elder McDowell remarking, as he held his frying-pan over the fire, that "he did not propose to be scalped on an empty stomach." It was soon ascertained, however, that the Indians were two friendly Kickapoos, who had come to bid their white friends farewell; but the incident proved the different material of which the company was composed, and had not a little to do with the estimate in which they subsequently held each other's character.

The next day, the mother and child were left at the house of Philip Cook, before mentioned, as this was considered sufficiently remote from the seat of war to be safe; and the remainder of the party pushed on to Indiana. A. B. Phillips and James Spence, with their families, had taken refuge within a fortification on the Mackinaw. But, in the Fall of the same year, nearly all of the persons mentioned in the exodus returned to their claims.

The third significant reference to the McDowell family is about early banking.

The first bank was established in Fairbury by Judge McDowell and Nathan E. Lyman, in 1864, and was known as the Fairbury Bank. In 1867, Jno. J. Taylor was admitted a partner, and it finally developed into the First National Bank, and was organized as such in 1874 with Isaac P. McDowell as President and Nathan E. Lyman (now of Rockford, Ill.) as Cashier. I. P. McDowell is still President, and T. S. O. McDowell is Cashier. Bartlett, Beech & Dominy commenced the banking business June 15, 1874, and still conduct it in all its branches.

The fourth significant reference to the McDowell family is about their early pioneer life in Avoca Township.

The first settlement was made in Avoca Township in 1830. In December of that year, Isaac Jourdan made a claim here, upon which he settled, but a few days before the commencement of the "deep snow." He came from Brown County, Illinois, but whether that was his native place or not we were unable to learn. His wife was the first white woman in this township. William Popejoy, John Hannaman and their families settled in this neighborhood on Christmas Day of the same year, and but a week or two after Jourdan. These latter were from Ohio, and became permanent citizens.

This constituted the settlements in this section up to 1832, when William McDowell came to the county and made a claim upon which he settled in May, which was the Spring of the Black Hawk War. He left his old home in Ohio in 1828, and stopped at La Fayette, Indiana, on account of school facilities, as Illinois, (or this portion of it) was then beyond the confines of civilization. He remained there four years when he came to Livingston County and settled in what is now Avoca Township, as noted above, in the Spring of the Black Hawk War. His family consisted of five sons; John, Woodford G., James, Hiram and Joseph B. McDowell, and one daughter, who married a Mr. Tucker. They, together with John McDowell, still live in Avoca; Woodford G. and James live in Fairbury,

Hiram is in Kansas, and Joseph is Register of the Land Office at Lincoln, Nebraska.

Soon after the settlement of the McDowells, vague rumors began to circulate through the sparsely settled community in regard to the Black Hawk War, which was raging north of their settlement. But there was no mail nearer than Bloomington, no railroad or telegraph lines, and news facilities were restricted within the narrowest limits. In illustration of the disadvantages under which they lived regarding the reception of news, several weeks after the McDowells had settled in their new home, a man named Phillips, living but a mile or two distant, in what is now Indian Grove Township, was out hunting some hogs that had strayed away from him, when he came suddenly upon the McDowell encampment, and the astonishment he displayed in having neighbors of whose proximity he was ignorant was almost equal to that exhibited by Robinson Crusoe when he discovered the footprints on his lonely island.

Rumors becoming more rife of the Indians and Indian outrages, Mr. McDowell and some of his neighbors went to the Kickapoo town, one Sunday, to church, where there were several hundred Indians, and their suspicions were aroused at the absence of all warriors from the Indian camp. The Kickapoos informed them that the Sacs had threatened "to come and kill them if

they did not join them in the war," and advised the whites, with whom they were on the most friendly terms, to return to the settlements further east. This so alarmed the little colony that, after considering the matter, they decided to return to the Wabash, and on the 29th of May, 1832, they commenced their retreat toward the rising sun. Though this retreat never became so famed in history as that of Bonaparte from Moscow, yet an event occurred upon the route worthy of record in these pages.

The first night after their departure, Mrs. Jourdan, who was in a delicate condition, was taken sick, and, notwithstanding their haste and fright, the party agreed to stop a day or two, on her account. But, the next morning, their alarm was much heightened by discovering a couple of Indians ride up and take a survey of their camp from a distant elevation. Believing that an attack would be made, and notwithstanding their arms consisted of but two old fowling pieces, they nobly resolved to stand by the Jourdans. Mrs. Jourdan, however, with a courage and resolution worthy of a Spartan mother, made up her mind to travel, and the cavalcade moved on. The McDowells, who had a large "old Pennsylvania wagon-bed," surrendered it to the ladies, and they converted it into a kind of hospital for Mrs. Jourdan, and all through the long day that heroic woman bore her suffering and pain without a murmur.

The next morning, and the second after starting for the east, she was delivered of a daughter, which, here be it said, grew up and made a most estimable lady.

Without further incident worthy of note, they arrived at the Indiana settlement in safety.

In the Fall of 1832, after the storms of war had passed by, and the sun of Black Hawk had forever set on the plains of Illinois, the little colony returned to their claims on the Vermilion River, where they made permanent settlements.

The mode of making a claim in those days was by "blazing" it out in the timber or staking it off on the prairie. The land was not surveyed until 1833, and every man squatted where it suited, his inclination, providing no one else had preceded him.

Of these few early pioneers, who came here before the Black Hawk War and who sought safety in flight, we would say, before passing to other and subsequent scenes, that Jourdan remained in the settlement for several years, then sold out his claim and returned to the southern part of the State, from whence he came. Popejoy and Hanneman both died in the neighborhood, the latter soon after his return in the Fall of 1832, and was the first death in the new settlement. Mr. McDowell, the old patriarch of all the McDowells, died here in 1834. His widow remained on the homestead; filled the place of both father and mother toward

her children, and died in 1858 at an advanced age.

The fifth significant reference to the McDowell family was about William McDowell's brother.

Thomas G. McDowell, a younger brother of Wm. McDowell, came to Illinois in 1848. He settled out on the prairie, about half a mile from the timber, and was the first actual settlement made outside of the timber. It was spoken of in considerable wonderment, and the people used to say that "Uncle Tommy McDowell had settled away out on the prairie," which was looked upon then as equivalent to being "out of creation."

He states that when he came to Avoca there were but three settlements between the Wabash country and this place. The people did their milling at Green's mill, on the Fox River, and their store trading at Ottawa. His first trip to mill was to the one above mentioned, and he was four days in making it. He contracted to take twenty-five bushels of grain to mill and have it ground for a man in the neighborhood, for which he was to receive fifty bushels of corn, worth then the enormous sum of ten cents per bushel.

The sixth significant reference to the McDowell family was about William's duties as Justice of the Peace.

The first marriage was that of Harvey Rounsaville and Miss Ann Thompson, who were married in September, 1833.

"Will you trust me, Anna. dear?
Walk beside me, without fear?
May I carry, if I will,
All your burdens up the hill?"
And she answered. with a laugh.
"No, but you may carry half."

They were married by William McDowell, a Justice of the Peace, who had been elected but a few weeks before, and this was his first official act in tying matrimonial knots. Judge McDowell informed us that his father was very much troubled about a form of ceremony to use on the momentous occasion, and did not know what to do about it. But his wife came to his rescue. She was an ardent Methodist, and, of course, possessed a Discipline, which she presented to her husband. From this book he committed to memory the entire marriage ceremony of the Methodist Episcopal Church. and used it to unite these two loving hearts.

The seventh significant reference to the McDowell family was about William's wife and the church at Avoca.

The first sermon preached in Avoca Township was at the house of Squire McDowell, and was preached by Rev. James Eckels in the Spring of 1833. The first religious society was organized at his house in the following Fall, by "Father Royle," as he was called, and one of the pioneer Methodist preachers of Illinois. It was a kind of mission, and was embraced in the old preacher's circuit, which extended from the Illinois River to the State line, and from Ottawa to the Mackinaw River. When the weather was favorable, he would make his round in four weeks; but in bad weather was delayed, sometimes, in reaching his appointments on time. McDowell's was the only preaching place in the settlement until the era of school houses. Judge McDowell informed us that, although his mother was blind for twenty years previous to her death, yet in all that time she never failed to have her house put in order for church.

Indeed, from all accounts to be had, Mrs. McDowell seems to have been an extraordinary woman. Her husband died in 1834 and left her in an almost unbroken wilderness, with a family on her hands. But she never shrank from her trust, or sunk down in despondency. She kept her family together until all were settled in life, and her work finished.

The first church in the township owes its erection principally to her and her family. It was built in 1857, and as it was the first church in this part of the country. it was named by Mrs. McDowell the "Pioneer Methodist Church," a name it bears to this day. The edifice is 32x50 feet, sixteen feet to the ceiling, a good frame, and cost two thousand dollars. It has quite an interesting history. After it was framed and put up, and two sides "weather-boarded" in, "the winds blew and the floods came and beat upon that house, and it fell." Literally speaking, we presume it was not founded upon a rock, but upon the sand or soil.

Any way, it was blown down, and not one stone or stick was left upon another. They went to work, however, with renewed vigor. A subscription of several hundred dollars had been made, and after the disaster, Judge McDowell was appointed Superintendent of the work, and directed to push it forward to completion. He had but little of the money that had been subscribed, and but little of his own, as he informed us, yet it so happened that never was there a bill presented to him, for work or material for the church, but he had money enough on hand at the time to pay it. When the building was finished and dedicated, they owed not a dollar, except to him, and to him their indebtedness was \$1,400, on which they agreed to pay him interest until the debt was discharged. The financial crisis of '57 followed, and the amount, principal and interest, finally reached \$1,900. The Trustees concluded

they must have a deed for the property, and came to McDowell, who now lived in Fairbury, to know what sum he would take to give them a deed. He told them to go back and collect all the money they could, and then come and see him again. They did so, and finally returned and told him that \$200 was all they could raise. He took the amount and gave them a deed to the church, leaving the amount of his subscription to the edifice, including interest, about \$1,700.

The first preacher in charge of the church after it was completed was Rev. James Watson. It was dedicated by Rev. Z. Hall, of Woodford County, another of the old pioneer Methodist preachers of Central Illinois. The present Pastor of the Church is Rev. Mr. Underhill, and, all things considered, it is in quite a flourishing condition. It being the oldest church in this part of the country, many others have been formed, which drew on its membership, and thus its numbers are not so large as when it was the only house of worship for miles around. This church is the final result of the little mission established at McDowell's in 1833, by Father Royle, as already noticed.

The eighth significant reference to the McDowell family was about one of the McDowell's leaving Illinois and helping to start Fairbury, Nebraska.

In 1854, Judge McDowell and his brothers built a steam sawmill in Avoca Township, to which was attached one run of stones for grinding corn, but the main business of the mill was sawing. In 1869, he moved the mill to Nebraska, where it was chiefly instrumental in locating the county seat of Jefferson County, at the village of Fairbury, named by the Judge for the town in which he lives. He succeeded in getting a post office and blacksmith shop at the place, then moved his mill there, and after interesting the County Commissioners, they located the county seat at his village.

This was the first and only mill ever in this town, except perhaps occasionally a portable saw-mill. In the early times, most of the people of this section did their milling at Green's Mill, on Fox River, near Ottawa. This was the principal mill until one was built at Wilmington. Judge McDowell informed us that he once went on horseback to Blue's horse mill down on Rock Creek, and on his return the Vermilion was too high to cross, and he put his "turn of meal" on a raft and ferried it over, and swam his horse by the side of it. At another time, he and his brother-in-law, Hefner, went to Green's Mill, and both of their horses died with the milk sickness before they could get back home.

The first public road through Avoca Township was the State road from Danville to Ottawa, and extending on to the Rock River country. The mail was carried along this route on horseback, and was Uncle Sam's first trip through here. except when his armed legions pursued the fugitive Black Hawk and his warriors. The road from Lafayette to Hennepin was also an early highway of travel through this country. The first ferry we have any account of in the neighborhood was at the crossing of these roads over the Vermilion River, and consisted of a raft of red elm logs, which, when seasoned, are extremely light. When the river was too high to ford, they would put the wagons and freight on the raft and take it across, while the horses were forced to swim themselves over.

One day in the Winter or early Spring, a man came along in a wagon drawn by two horses and was very anxious to get over. The river had been frozen for some time and was just breaking up. The man concluded to try to cross on the ice, and taking out his horses led them on to a large cake of ice which broke in two after he had gotten them on it, leaving their fore feet on one piece and their hind feet on the other. With the greatest care he finally managed to get them on one piece and paddled them over to safety. He then re-crossed and got his wagon on another ice cake and ferried it over without accident, hitched up his team and went on his way.

The McDowells and some of the neighbors had a canoe in partnership, which was used for neighborhood convenience. Finally, some of the stockholders in this enterprise got at loggerheads, and to end the strife and hard feelings, Judge McDowell and his brother James went down one day and measured off their own part of the canoe, and sawed it in two, and carried their half away, and left the other half floating in the river, cabled to the bank.

When the McDowells came to Avoca, they brought with them some young cattle belonging to a friend in Indiana, and which they proposed to "break to work" for him. After they had become well "broke," Woodford G. and John McDowell took them back to Indiana, and returned them to the owner: and as a kind of coincidence, Judge McDowell related to us an anecdote on the 26th of June, precisely forty-six years after he and his brother started with the young cattle for Indiana. There was not a house, at the time, for forty-five miles after leaving the settlement. For the purpose of riding, and as a protection against the rays of a June sun, they had built them a sled, to which they had added a top, and with a good stock of provisions, they started for the classic land of Hoosier. The trail of emigrant wagons had made two tracks, with a kind of unbroken middle. While moving on, one day, they discovered, settled on a wild crab-apple bush between these tracks, a swarm of bees. In passing each side of them, the oxen struck their

legs against the mass, knocking them off, and when the young men discovered them, they were rising around their team in an angry cloud. They whipped up their cattle and ran out from amongst them without serious results. Some distance beyond, they found a man plowing corn, to whom they related the occurrence. He went back and "hived" them, and on their return told them that their bees were "working" well.

The first bridge in Avoca was built over the south branch of the Vermilion, in 1844. Isaac Burgit, Road Supervisor on the west side of the river, and Judge McDowell on the east side, called out the road labor and built the bridge. It was all hewed out of the neighboring forest, and was a substantial structure.

The village of Avoca was laid out in 1854, by Judge W. G. McDowell, who owned the land on which it was located. It was surveyed by Amos Edwards, then County Surveyor. The first store in it was opened just before it was laid out as a village, by the McDowells, as noticed in the preceding pages, and for several years it was a flourishing business place. But on the laying out of Fairbury, the sun of Avoca began to decline. Many of the houses were removed to the latter place, and the Judge at last got it vacated and discontinued by a special act of the Legislature.

Avoca Cemetery, across the creek from the village, was laid off by the elder McDowell. He and those of his family who have departed this life are buried there. Susan Philips was the first one to occupy the place, and was buried in it in August, 1833.

Moore Cemetery is a private burying ground on the west side of the Grove. Jonathan Moore was the first buried in it, and was interred there in 1839. Nothing now remains to show where once stood a thriving village but the Pioneer Methodist Church, which has already been noticed.

McDowell village is on the Chicago & Paducah Railroad, about six miles south of Pontiac, and has between fifty and one hundred inhabitants. It was laid out as a village in 1873, by Judge McDowell, who owns the land, and it is named for him. Chas. Hewitson surveyed it. The first house was put up by McDowell before the village was laid out, and was used as a dwelling. The first post office was kept by John Cottrell, and was established in 1872. Hugh T. Pound is the present Postmaster.

The first store was built and occupied by Ben Walton, now of Fairbury. The village has two stores at present, one kept by R. B. Phillips and the other by Chas. Danforth; two blacksmith and wagon shops, the one by Henshaw and the other by Jacob Schide. Frank B. Bregga is an extensive grain dealer, but the village has no elevator or grain warehouse. One of

the principal features of the place is the stone quarry, owned by McDowell, which yields a very good quality of lime rock, quite valuable for foundations, and which makes also an excellent quality of lime. A large kiln is in full operation at present, which turns out about 300 bushels at a burning.

Lodemia Station is on the Chicago & Paducah Railroad, a short distance south of McDowell. It contains nothing but a post office and church. It has no depot, but is merely a shipping point with switch and side track. The post office was established in August, 1877, with Dr. C. B. Ostrander as Postmaster.

It is kept at the parsonage, and the minister, Mr. Underhill, attends to the duties. The church, which belongs to the Methodists, was built here in 1876, and is a very neat little frame edifice, which cost \$2,800. The society was organized in 1858, in the school house, under the pastoral charge of Rev. John V. Stubbles, and the church, when completed in 1876, was dedicated by Rev. Robert G. Pearce, Presiding Elder of the District at the time. Their present preacher is Rev. Mr. Underhill, and the congregation is large and flourishing for a country church.

Champlin is also a station, or rather a shipping point in this township, and is just south of Lodemia; makes no pretensions beyond a side track for shipping grain and stock.

The first school taught in Avoca Township was by Samuel Breese, commencing in the Fall of 1835 and continuing until the next Spring. Mrs. McDowell, the widow of William McDowell, Nathan Popejoy, who first settled in Pontiac Township, and James Blake, built the first school house. It was a little log cabin, 16x18 feet, having a big wood fire-place that would take in a stick ten feet long; and in this cabin Breese taught the first school as noted above. James McDowell held the office of School Treasurer for twenty-seven years in succession. Lyman Burgit was the first Treasurer, but died soon after his appointment to the office, when McDowell was elected to succeed him, and held the position until his removal into Indian Grove Township.

When he was first elected Treasurer, there was but one school district and it embraced the entire township, and the school fund consisted of what was termed the "College and Academy Fund," from which this township drew annually about \$30. The first Board of Trustees were Isaac Burgit, W.G. McDowell and N. Hefner. When McDowell resigned the office of School Treasurer, the fund was about \$4,500. At present, R. B. Foster is Treasurer; and from his last report to the County Superintendent of Schools we extract the following:

Number of males in township under
21..... 200

Number of females in township under
21..... 210

Total. 410

Number of males in township between 6 and
21.....153

Number of females in township between 6 and
21.....163

Total.....316

Number of males attending
school.....86

Number of females attending
school.....114

Total.....200

Number of male teachers
employed..... 8

Number of female teachers
employed..... 10

Total.....18

Amount paid male
teachers..... \$1,061.30

Amount paid female
teachers.....\$1,303.00

Total.....\$2,364.30

Estimated value of school
property.....\$4,006.00

Amount of tax levy for support of
schools..... \$2,053.87

Principal of township
fund..... \$5,366.49

There are eight school districts in the township containing good, substantial school houses, in which schools are taught for the usual number of months in each year.

The county adopted township organization in 1857, when this town took the name of Avoca, from the village and post office which bore the same, and had been given by Nicholas Hefner, who was the first Postmaster. It is an Indian name, but what its signification is, we are unable to say. The first Supervisor was Wm. Fugate, and the first Town Clerk, Isaac R. Clark. Gideon Hutchinson is at present Supervisor, and J. W. McDowell, Town Clerk. Formerly, this and Indian Grove Township composed one election precinct. At that time, it was largely Democratic and contained, it is said, but seven Whig votes. But in the revolution of political parties, things have changed. In Avoca Township, as well as elsewhere, and it now goes as largely Republican as it did Democratic in the old times. In the "eternal fitness of things," it is the Whig sections that have generally turned out to

be the strongest Republican, and not often that a Democratic stronghold has made a change of this kind. During the late war its record was as good as that of any township in Livingston County, according to the number of its population, and it turned out many brave soldiers to battle for the Union. So far as can be obtained, their names are given in the general war record of this work; their deeds are engraved upon the hearts of their countrymen, and need no commendations here.

Judge McDowell was Collector of Revenues in 1844, when Avoca and Indian Grove were all one district, and at that time, as we were informed, there was a premium on wolf scalps. A man who had killed a wolf could go before a Justice of the Peace and make affidavit to that effect, when he would receive a State warrant or order for one dollar, which was good for State taxes, and on presenting this document to the County Auditor, would get an order, which was current for all county taxes. The Judge says he collected almost the entire revenue that year in county orders and wolf scalps, not getting money enough to pay his own percentage on collecting it.

The Chicago & Paducah Railroad was built through this township in 1872, and has been of paramount importance and benefit in uniting this part of the county with the seat of justice. The township of Avoca took \$10,000 stock in the road, and has always shown the greatest interest in

the enterprise and its success, There is but one regular station and depot in the township, McDowell, with two other shipping points, viz.: Lodemia and Champlin. These have switches and side tracks, but at present are not provided with depot buildings and telegraph offices.

The only representative of the legal fraternity in Avoca Township was Judge McDowell, who lived in this town, where he practiced, as occasion required, until 1860, when he removed to the village of Fairbury. In 1859, he was elected County Judge, an office he filled with credit. He was Recording Steward of the Methodist Church at Avoca for twenty-five years in succession.

The ninth significant reference to the McDowell family was a listing of the earliest settlers of Avoca Township.

AVOCA TOWNSHIP.

Isaac Burgit, born in Schenectady County, N. Y.; settled here in 1834; removed to Ottawa in 1850.

Harrison Flesher, born in Virginia; settled here in 1835; removed to Iowa in 1840.

John Hannamon, settled here in 1831; died in November, 1832.

Nicholas Hefner, born in Greenbrier County, Virginia; died in March, 1850.

Isaac Jordon, born in Ohio; settled here in 1830; removed to Southern Illinois in 1834.

— McDowell, born in Bourbon County, Kentucky; settled here in 1832; died September 6, 1834.

W. G. McDowell, P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1832.

James McDowell, P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1832.

John McDowell, P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1832.

Hiram McDowell, born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1832; removed to Kansas in 1876.

Joseph B. McDowell, born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1832; removed to Kansas in 1869.

— McDowell, P. O. Fairbury, born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled herein 1850.

I. P. McDowell, P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled herein 1850.

Thomas G. McDowell, P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto County, Ohio; settled here in 1848.

William Popejoy, born in Darke County, Ohio; settled here in 1831; died in, November, 1848.

Elijah Thompson, born in Ohio; settled here in 1833; removed to Kankakee in 1834; died in 1839.

J. Titus, P. O. Fairbury; born in Washington County, Massachusetts; settled here in 1850.

Le Baron was Human

It is odd that the 1878 history book left out the first names of two of the McDowell's in the list above. I guess this proves that Le Baron was human and he made mistakes also!

The tenth significant reference to the McDowell family was the section of the book describing the service records of the Civil War units from the Fairbury area. H.H. McDowell served in the 129th Infantry, Company E. James M. McDowell served in the 7th Cavalry, Company K. He died at Helena, Arkansas, on September 13, 1862.

For more information about these two Fairbury units that served in the Civil War, see the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois and the Civil War*.

The eleventh significant reference to the McDowell family is the various biographies in this 1878 history book.

JOHN McDowell, farmer and stock raiser, Sec. 21; P. O. Fairbury; was born in Scioto Co., Ohio, on the 5th of May, 1813; in 1828, his father's family removed to Tippecanoe Co., Ind., in 1832, came to Livingston County and settled in Avoca Township; he is the next to the oldest of the family of eight who came at that time.

Of the family, two sisters are deceased: one is married and lives in Avoca Township; two of the brothers live in Fairbury and one in Kansas and one in Nebraska.

Mr. McDowell was married Nov. 16, 1837, to Miss Elizabeth Moore, of Indian Grove Township; she was born in Overton Co., Tennessee, on the 20th of June, 1820; they have four children living-Sarah A., Serepta J., Mary A., and Lewis P. Mr. McDowell opened his present farm in the Spring of 1853, moving with his family on the 12th of

April. He owns 240 acres of land, with good buildings, and valued at \$45 an acre.

J.W. McDowell, farmer and stock raiser, Sec. 22; P. O. Fairbury; was born Dec. 25, 1849, in Avoca Township, on the farm now occupied by him; he is a son of James McDowell, one of the five brothers who came to Livingston County from Indiana in 1832; a few years later, his father opened up the farm now occupied by him and containing 900 acres of land.

Mr. McDowell was married on the 13th of February, 1877, to Miss Chloe Fugate, daughter of William Fugate, another of the early settlers of Avoca Township; she was born in Avoca Township Dec. 5, 1859; they have one child—Gertie M. Mr. McDowell is at present Town Clerk, to which office he was elected in 1877 and re-elected in 1878.

OLIVER P. McDOWELL, hardware, stoves, tin ware and agricultural implements, Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 7, 1827, but removed to Indiana in early childhood with his parents, who settled in Tippecanoe Co. in 1828; afterward removing to Montgomery Co., that State, where the subject of this sketch resided until his removal to Avoca Tp., this county, in the Fall of 1850; he engaged in farming, which occupation he followed for several years; removed to Fairbury, his present home, in the Spring of 1865; owns 700 acres of land, valued at \$35,000.

In 1853, he was married to Miss Emily M. Myer, who was born in Maryland March 25, 1832; seven children by this union- Osmer N., born March 7, 1854; Laura C. (wife of T. K. Blain), Sept. 27, 1856; Emma, Oct. 13, 1858; Joseph E. L., Jan. 26, 1863; Adda E., Oct. 27, 1864; Charles P., Aug. 5, 1867; Luella, March 7, 1870.

THOMAS G. McDOWELL; retired farmer; P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 1, 1806, where he resided until 1822, then removing to what is now West Virginia and engaged in the manufacture of salt. Was married, in 1835, to Miss Elizabeth C. Keeney; she was born in Greenbrier Co., Va., June 13, 1807; they have seven children living- Ann E., Franklin C., Moses K., Sarah F. (wife of J.M. Zook), Mary V. (wife of D. R. Morgan), Martha E. (wife of Thomas Brownlee), and Carrie E. In 1836 he removed to Indiana, locating in Montgomery Co., and engaged in farming; removed to Illinois in the Fall of 1848, reaching his place of destination, Avoca Tp., this county, Nov. 1.

WOODFORD G. McDOWELL, attorney at law and dealer in real-estate, Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 3, 1818. but removed to Indiana in childhood, with his parents, who settled in Tippecanoe Co., that State, in 1828; in 1832, he came with his father and uncle and brother James, to Illinois, arriving in what is now Avoca Tp., this county, May 2; here they planted some corn and commenced other preparations for a

home; but on account of the Indian troubles (Black Hawk War) they returned to their homes in Indiana the same month, where they remained until the following November, then returning with his father's family to their former possessions in this State, where they began pioneer life, which is more fully set forth in the history of Avoca Tp. The subject of this sketch was appointed Master in Chancery by Judge T. Lyle Dickey in 1844; elected Judge of the County Court in 1859; served for fourteen years as Justice of the Peace, and owing (as the Judge says) to good luck, he was sustained, during this period, in all of his decisions in cases of appeal; has also held other minor offices; owns 320 acres of land in this county, valued at \$14,400, and 2,000 acres in Nebraska, valued at \$20,000.

His first marriage was in 1842, to Elizabeth Lane; she was born near Danville, Ill., died in October, 1866; eight children by this union, only three of whom are living--Sarah L. wife of L. C. Champlin, of Fairbury, Neb.), Eliza J. (wife of O. H. Phillips, of St. Joe, Mo.), and Mary C.; lost five--Nancy A., died Sept. 24, 1845; Willis P., Aug 15, 1849, Elizabeth K., Oct 29, 1851; Orpha A.L., Oct. 28, 1854; Alice E., Aug 9, 1857.

Was again married in 1867, to Marion L. Stone, who was born in Maryland, near Washington City; she died in 1874; his marriage to his present wife, Anna C. Mitchell, took place in November of that

year; her birth-place was Scioto Co.,
Ohio.

The twelfth and last significant reference to the McDowell family in this history book is the business directory section of the book.

Pontiac

McDowell, H. H., Attorney at Law; office over *Free Trader*, north side of public square.

Fairbury

McDowell, W. G., Attorney at Law and Notary Public; Real Estate bought and sold, Taxes paid and Titles examined; Pensions, Bounties and Government Land Claims a specialty. Special Agent for the sale of Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Lands in Kansas, and Lands Generally in Nebraska, Missouri and Texas.

McDowell, O. P., Dealer in Hardware, Stoves, Nails, Tin ware, Farm Machinery, Castings, Cutlery, Iron and Steel.

The author of the 1878 history book noted that around the year 1832 there were not more than a dozen families in the whole county, of which were Rook, at Rook's Creek, the McDowells at Avoca, and Darnalls at Indian Grove. The McDowell's arrived in 1832, just three years after the Darnalls arrived south of Fairbury in 1829.

CHAPTER 3

The Ohio Family

The McDowell family moved from Ohio, via Tippecanoe and adjacent Montgomery County, Indiana, to the Fairbury, Illinois, area. James McDowell was born April 1, 1747. He died July 6, 1809, in Scioto County, Ohio. His country of birth is unverified.

He married Sarah Gorrell. She was born July 26, 1763, in Pennsylvania. She died September 5, 1834, in Tippecanoe, Indiana. She was buried at the McDowell Cemetery in Madison Township in Montgomery County, Indiana, with her sons Hiram, John, and Woodford G. McDowell.

James and Sarah McDowell had nine children.

1. William McDowell B: 25 Sep 1785 Bourbon Co. Kentucky D: 6 Sep 1834, Avoca Township, IL.
2. Mary "Polly" McDowell B: 1787 Virginia D: 25 Apr 1845 Mechanicsburg, Boone Co. Indiana. [The area she was born in was originally Virginia, but became Kentucky in 1792.]
3. Elizabeth "Betsy" McDowell B: 1790 Woodford Co. Kentucky D: 12 Jan 1807 Scioto County, Ohio. [Death location is not verified.]
4. John McDowell B: 1 Jan 1792 Woodford Co., Kentucky D: 16 Jan 1843 Montgomery, Indiana.
5. James T. McDowell B: 11 Jan 1794 Woodford Co., Kentucky D: 17 Sep 1881 Crestline, Kansas.

6. Martha McDowell B: 1795 Woodford Co., Kentucky D: 10 May 1847 Madison Township, Montgomery Co., Indiana.

7. Woodford G. McDowell B: 1 Jan 1798 Woodford Co., Kentucky D: 19 Apr 1847 Montgomery, Indiana

8. Hiram M. McDowell B: 1800 Woodford Co., Kentucky: 19 Apr 1847, Montgomery, Indiana.

9. Thomas G. McDowell B: 1 Feb 1806 Scioto, Ohio D: 10 Nov 1898, Gibson City, IL.

Fairbury, Illinois, McDowells

We are primarily interested in William McDowell (1785-1834), John McDowell (1792-1843) and Thomas G. McDowell (1806-1896), since they settled in the Fairbury area.

William McDowell came to the Fairbury area in 1832. Thomas G. McDowell came to the Fairbury area later in 1848. John McDowell (1792-1843) died in Indiana. Some of his children came to the Fairbury area starting around 1850.

In subsequent chapters, we will examine the family histories of each of these three brothers.

CHAPTER 4

The William McDowell (1785-1834) Family

William McDowell (1785-1834)

William married Sarah Dever in Scioto County, Ohio, on November 28, 1809. The 1878 history book lists the number of children that William and Sarah had in their family.

On the 5th day of May, 1832, William McDowell, from Scioto County, Ohio, with his five sons, John, Hiram, Woodford G., Joseph and James, and his two daughters, Betty and Hannah, settled in what is now Avoca Township, on the Little Vermilion.

In another part of the 1878 history book, it gives a different accounting of the number of children in the family.

His family consisted of five sons; John, Woodford G., James, Hiram and Joseph B. McDowell, and one daughter, who married a Mr. Tucker. They, together with John McDowell, still live in Avoca; Woodford G. and James live in Fairbury, Hiram is in Kansas, and Joseph is Register of the Land Office at Lincoln, Nebraska.

Both accounts say there were five sons. They differ because one account says two daughters and the other account says one daughter.

Using Ancestry.com, there were actually three girls in the family; Mary (Polly), Elizabeth (Betty), and Hannah. Mary "Polly" McDowell married Nicholas Henry Hefner on December 21, 1830, when she was 19 years old in Tippecanoe, Indiana. When her husband died in 1851 in Avoca, she then married Joel Tucker in 1854.

William and his wife had eight children.

1. Mary "Polly" McDowell (1810-1892)
2. John McDowell (1813-1901)
3. James McDowell (1815-1880)
4. Elizabeth (Betsy) McDowell (1818-1841)
5. Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904)
6. Hiram M. McDowell (1822-1884)
7. Hannah D. McDowell (1823-1844)
8. Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916)

Mary "Polly" McDowell (1810-1892)

Mary "Polly" McDowell married Nicholas Henry Hefner (1804-1851) on December 21, 1830, when she was 19 years old in Tippecanoe, Indiana. When her husband died in 1851 in Avoca, she then married Joel Tucker (1800-1885) in 1854.

Polly had 10 children with her first husband Nicholas Henry Hefner.

1. Matilda C. Hefner (1831-1913)
2. William Hefner (1833-1852)
3. Henry C. Hefner (1835-1911)
4. Sarah C. Hefner (1837-1909)
5. Oscar M. Hefner (1839-1915)
6. Nicholas H. Hefner (1841-1915)
7. Wesley W. Hefner (1844-1933)
8. Mary Adeline Hefner (1846-1922)
9. Newberry Hefner (1848-1851)
10. Harriet Hefner 1855-1933)

A living descendant of Mary "Polly" McDowell (1810-1892), provided the family photographs below.



Mary McDowell and her second husband Joel Tucker. Nicholas Hefner was her first husband.



Matilda Hefner Tucker (1831-1913), daughter Mary McDowell and Nicholas Hefner



Willard B. Tucker (1827-1901), husband of Matilda Hefner

John McDowell (1813-1901)

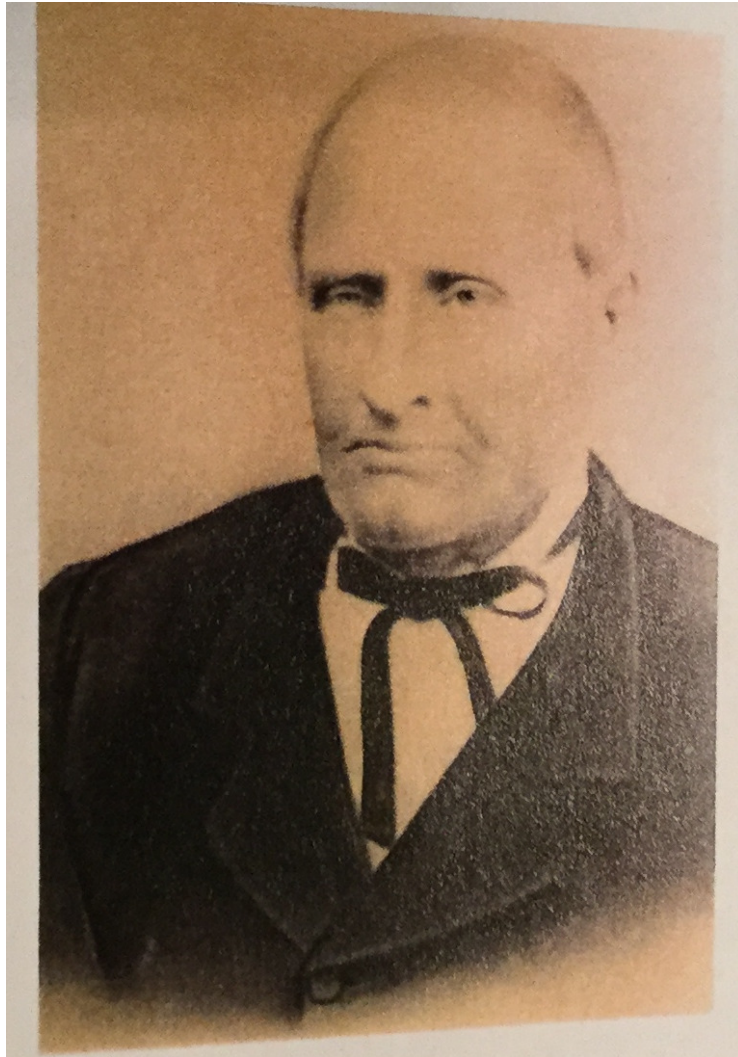
The 1878 history book has a biography for his family.

JOHN McDowell, farmer and stock raiser, Sec. 21; P. O. Fairbury; was born in Scioto Co., Ohio, on the 5th of May, 1813; in 1828, his father's family removed to Tippecanoe Co., Ind., in 1832, came to Livingston County and settled in Avoca Township; he is the next to the oldest of the family of eight who came at that time.

Of the family, two sisters are deceased: one is married and lives in Avoca Township; two of the brothers live in Fairbury and one in Kansas and one in Nebraska.

Mr. McDowell was married Nov. 16, 1837, to Miss Elizabeth Moore, of Indian Grove Township; she was born in Overton Co., Tennessee, on the 20th of June, 1820: they have four children living-Sarah A., Serepta J., Mary A., and Lewis P. Mr. McDowell opened his present farm in the Spring of 1853, moving with his family on the 12th of April. He owns 240 acres of land, with good buildings, and valued at \$45 an acre.

A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided a photograph of John McDowell (1813-1911).



Ancestry.com yields eight children of John McDowell.

1. Jennie McDowell
2. Rachel M. McDowell (1838-1838)
3. Sarah A. McDowell (1839-1926)
4. Serepta Jane McDowell (1842-1935)
5. William J. McDowell (1844-1848)
6. Joseph G. McDowell (1847-1848)
7. Mary Alice McDowell (1854-1931)
8. Lewis P. McDowell (1858-1917)

Serepta Jane McDowell married John Virgin (1838-1900). John Virgin was an internationally known importer of Percheron French draft horses to Fairbury, Illinois. He also built an unusual horse stable in Fairbury known as the *Horse Palace*. For more information about John Virgin, see the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition*.

In 1918, John H. McDowell published a book titled *History of the McDowells, Erwins, Irwins and Connections*. In subsequent notations, this book will be referred to as the 1918 McDowell book. This book has a section about the family of John McDowell.

MRS. CHURCHILL ON ANCESTORS
OF FAMILY.

John, son of William and Sarah
McDowell, born at Scioto County. Ohio,
May 5, 1813; died at Harper, Kansas.
Dec. 2, 1901; married at Indian Grove,
Livingston County, Ill., Nov. 16, 1837, to
Elizabeth Julian Moore; born at Nashville.
Tenn., June 20, 1820; died at Mount
Hope, Kansas, on Nov. 22, 1895.

Children: 1 Sarah Angeline, born Nov. 25, 1839; 2 Sarepta Jane, born April 5, 1842; 3 Mary Alice, born Jan. 13, 1854; 4 Lewis Preston, born Oct. 15, 1859.

Marriages: 1 Sarah Angeline, to E. B. Titus, March 5, 1857; 2 Sarepta Jane to John Virgin, Jan. 26, 1865; 3 Mary Alice to Andrew B. Claudon, Nov. 14, 1877; 4 Lewis Preston, to February, 1878.

Children of E. B. and Sarah Angeline Titus: 1 Elizabeth, born July 14, 1866; 2 Joseph M., born Feb. 3, 1868; 3 Ellis B., born July 10, 1869; 4 Lewis H., born May 18, 1873.

Children of John and Sarepta Jane Virgin: 1 Minnie Alice, born at Fairbury, Ill., Aug. 18, 1868; married Cooley; 2 Daisy Dean, born at Fairbury, Ill., Feb. 24, 1876.

Children of Andrew B. and Mary Alice Claudon: 1 Alice Bessie, born Oct. 20, 1878, married Mosiman; 2 Nelson Jay, born May 22, 1883; 3 Andrew Bertram, born Jan. 28, 1889; 4 Edith Morie, born Oct. 17, 1892.

Children of Lewis Preston McDowell: 1 Bertram McDowell, born at Fairbury, Ill., Feb. 7, 1880; 2 Claudon McDowell, born at Mt. Hope, Kansas, July 5, 1892; Henry McDowell, born at Mt. Hope, Kansas, March 15, 1900; 4 Elizabeth McDowell, born at Harper, Kansas, Nov. 22, 1903.

Children of Elizabeth Titus Christian: 1 Mabel Christian, born Jan. 27, 1891; 2 Wayne B. Christian, born Feb. 7. 1894. Children of Joseph M. Titus: 1 Rosa A. Titus, born at Grand County, Utah, Jan. 22, 1898; 2 Mary L Titus, born at Grand County, Utah, Sept 3, 1899; 3 Elsie Titus, born at Grand County, Utah, March 15, 1901; 4 Joseph P. Titus, born at Grand County, Utah, Aug. 9, 1905; Lewis B. Titus, born at Grand County, Utah, Jan. 20, 1908.

Son of Minnie V. Cooley and John Virgin Cooley, born at Spokane, Wash., Dec. 29, 1897.

Children of Alice Bessie Claudon Mosiman: 1 Margaret Alice Mosiman, born at Morton, Ill., Jan. 27, 1900; 2 Dorothy Morie Mosiman, born at Morton, Ill., Aug. 2, 1905.

Son of Bertrum Claudon, Dan Brewer Claudon, born Dec. 24. 1916, at Fairbury, Ill.

A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided a photograph of Andrew and Mary Alice Claudon.



Andrew B. Claudon (1847-1932) and
Mary Alice McDowell Claudon (1854-1931)

James McDowell (1815-1880)

The June 12, 1880, Pantagraph published an obituary for James McDowell.

DEATH OF AN OLD CITIZEN

[Special to Pantagraph]

Fairbury, June 11. —James B. McDowell, who had his leg shattered five weeks ago, died last night from its effects, aged 66. He was the oldest settler in Livingston county, and for thirty years was treasurer of Avoca township, and for fifteen years its supervisor and postmaster. He was the heaviest stockholder of the First National Bank in this city, and had over six thousand acres of improved land in this township, besides a large amount of city property. He left property worth over \$125,000.

The 1888 history book has a biography for James McDowell, under the heading of his widow.

MRS. FRANCES McDOWELL,
Fairbury. This lady is the widow of the late James McDowell, a well-known business man of Livingston County who was the possessor of a fine property, which he accumulated partially in mercantile pursuits, and for many years was occupied as an extensive farmer and stock-raiser. The valuable estate left to his family embraces 1,700 acres of land, embellished with fine buildings, besides the residence which Mrs. McDowell occupies in the village of Fairbury.

Mr. McDowell was a native of Wayne County, Ind., and was born Jan. 28, 1824. He was reared to farm life, and pursued his early studies in the district schools. He came to Illinois with his father's family in 1832, and his home for several years afterward was in Avoca Township, this county.

His marriage to Miss Frances Wilson took place Dec. 11, 1845. Mr. and Mrs. McDowell lived in Avoca Township until June, 1873, during which time he held the position of Postmaster nine years. After locating in Fairbury he officiated as School Treasurer many years, and represented Indian Grove Township on the County Board of Supervisors.

He had identified himself with the Methodist Episcopal Church during his early manhood, and was prominent in its councils for thirty-five years. He officiated as Steward most of this time, and contributed largely to the maintenance and advancement of the society. Politically, he was strongly Republican. In his family he was kind, generous and indulgent, and in the community no man was held in higher esteem.

The death of Mr. McDowell occurred under very painful circumstances. In December, 1879, he was greatly injured by a runaway team, and suffered a fracture of one of his limbs, which resulted in his death five weeks later, Jan.

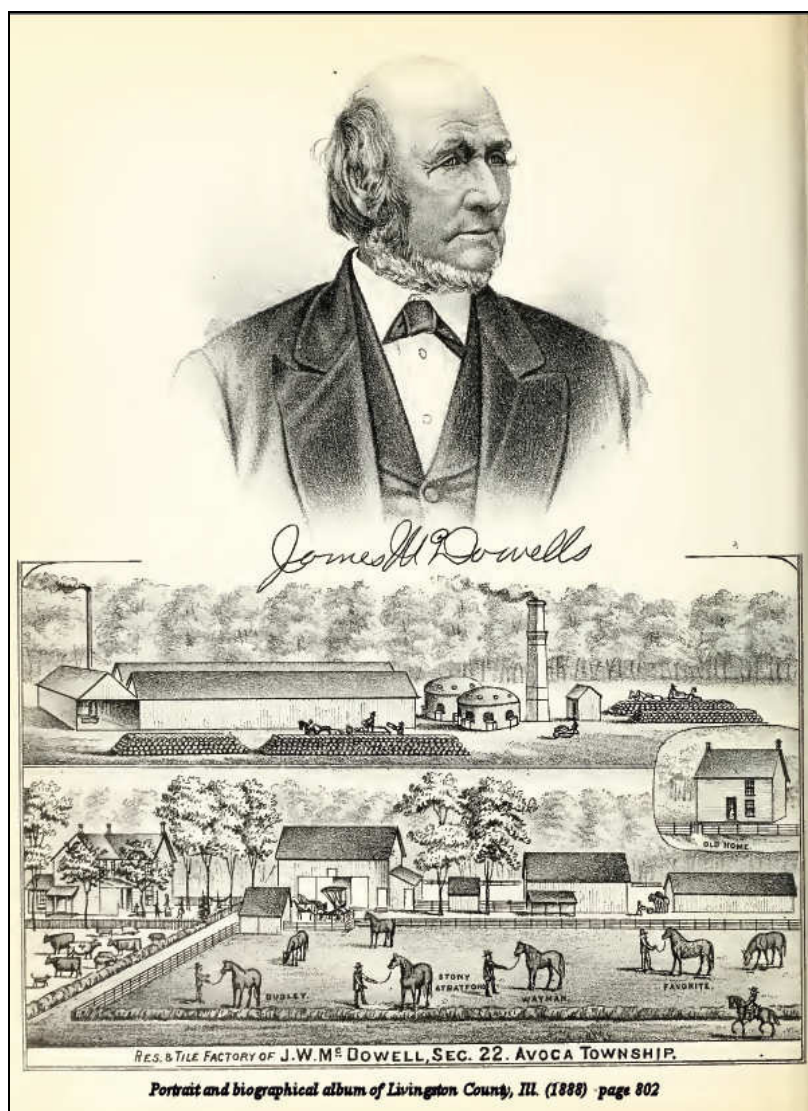
12, 1880. The bereaved family included his widow and five children.

Of the latter the eldest son, Jason L., married Miss Florence Wilson, and is a resident of Kansas; John W. married Miss Luella Tanner; Sarah J. is the wife of Hiel Ramsey; Grant Yates and Lillie E. are unmarried and at home with their mother.

Mrs. McDowell's parents, John and Mary (Williams) Wilson, were natives of North Carolina, the father of English and the mother of German ancestry. John Wilson followed farming all his life, and died in Carroll County, Ind., in 1843, aged fifty-two years. The mother had died in 1829, leaving seven children, namely, Isaac, Sarah, Rachel, Thomas, Jacob, Frances and William. After the death of Mr. McDowell, his son assisted in the adjustment of the estate and the carrying on of the farm; this included a tile manufactory, from which each year is derived a fine revenue. The land is mostly devoted to pasture, and the raising of grain and hay for the consumption of the fine stock which is raised upon it. This includes English and Norman horses, which are held for sale at Avoca.

Grant McDowell has inherited largely the business capacities of his father, and will keep up the reputation of the estate in the same admirable manner as he who projected and established it. He is a strong Republican politically, and bids fair to become prominent in the local affairs of his township.

The 1888 history book also has a portrait of James McDowell and his tile factory.



The 1888 biography of James McDowell's family includes five children. This matches the number of children found on Ancestry.com.

1. Jason Lee McDowell (1847-1924)
2. John William McDowell (1849-1919)
3. Sarah Isabel McDowell (1851-1928)
4. Grant Yates McDowell (1863-1955)
5. Lillie E. McDowell (1866-1938)

Grant Yates McDowell married Jennie Curl Dominy. They had a daughter, Marion McDowell (1905-1998), who married Floyd Stafford (1898-1980). The Stafford's were instrumental in establishing Fairbury's Echoes Museum in 1979. They donated some of their family items including the wedding dress of Jennie Curl Dominy - McDowell. Most of these items are on permanent display at the Echoes Museum.

The 1918 McDowell book contains the family history for James McDowell.

James McDowell, born at Scioto County, Ohio, Sept. 21. 1815, died at Fairbury, Ill., June 10, 1880; married in Carrol County, Indiana, Dec. 11, 1845, to Frances Wilson, who was born near Milton, Indiana, Wayne County, January 28, 1824, and died at Fairbury, Ill., Feb. 17, 1900.

Children of above:

1 Jason Lee, born at Avoca, Ill., Aug. 17, 1847; 2 John William, born at Avoca. Ill., Dec. 25, 1849; 3 Sarah I. born at Avoca, Ill.

Nov. 4, 1851; 4 Grant Y., born at Avoca, Ill., July 2, 1863; 5 Lillie E., born at Avoca, Ill., June 22, 1866.

Jason Lee, married Angie Wilson at Onarga. Ill., Nov. 26, 1874, who died Aug. 25, 1876. Jason Lee married Florence Wilson, at Sedalia, Mo., Jan. 26, 1881.

Children of above: 1 James Daniel, born Sept. 10, 1884; 2 John William, born Oct. 30, 1885; 3 Angie Frances, born June 10, 1888; 4 Ruth Evalyn, born Jan. 22, 1891; 5 Sadie Louise, born Sept. 25, 1892; 6 Denzel Isaac, born July 27, 1895.

John William married Chloe Fugate, Feb. 13, 1877, who died March 19, 1879.

J. W. married Luella Tanner. March 31, 1881, who died Aug. 2, 1901. J. W. married Frank Wilson Finley, March 15, 1904.

Children of above: 1 Gertrude M., born Feb. 24, 1878; 2 James Francis, born May 10, 1886.

Gertrude married Lewis Henderson, October 19, 1901, and their children are Dorothy Louise, born Nov. 30, 1902; John Thomas, born Sept. 2, 1906, and Frances, born June 2, 1909.

Sarah I., married Hiel J. Ramsey, Nov. 1, 1876.

Their children are: 1 Jessie Frances, born April 5, 1881; 2 Elmer Blaine, born Dec. 20, 1892.

Jessie married Fred F. Brydia, June 17, 1903, and they have one child, Marvene, born Jan. 17, 1907.

Elmer married Aldine Hanna, June 6, 1914.

Grant Y. married Jennie Dominy, June 18, 1890. Their children are: 1 James Lorenzo, born April 24, 1891; 2 Marion, born July 27, 1905.

Lillie E., married Frank L. Churchill, April 5, 1893. Their children are: 1 Fred Weaver, born May 12, 1896; 2 Woodford McDowell, born Oct. 23, 1897; James Delos, born Jan. 15, 1899; 4 Mildred, born Dec. 11, 1899; 5 Hannah Frances, born July 13, 1901.

The G.Y. McDowell Safe

The Ziegenhorn family purchased this safe at some point in time. They had a John Deere dealership in downtown Fairbury. Later they moved this dealership, and the G.Y. McDowell safe, to their new location on Route 24 about a half-mile west of Fairbury. Several businesses have been in this Route 24 building since the John Deere dealership closed. Currently, Alexander Lumber is occupying this building.

The G.Y. McDowell safe still works and is used by Alexander Lumber. Below is a photo taken by the author of the G.Y. McDowell safe in 2018. This safe has a very colorful nature scene painted on the front of the safe.



Marion McDowell Stafford's Photo Album

Marion Stafford's family photograph album at the Fairbury Echoes Museum has a photograph of Hiel J. Ramsey (1847-1929). He was married to Sarah Isabel McDowell (1851-1928).



A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided a photograph of a young Sarah Isabel McDowell (1851-1928). She was the daughter of James McDowell (1815-1880), and wife of Hiel Ramsey (1847-1929).



Marion Stafford's family photograph album at the Fairbury Echoes Museum also includes a photograph of John William McDowell (1849-1919).



Elizabeth (Betsy) McDowell (1818-1841)

She was born Feb 3, 1818, in Scioto County, Ohio. She married August John Felkey (1815-1890) in Avoca. She died in 1841 in Avoca.

They had two children.

Marion C. Felkey (1839-1880)

Lucina E. Felkey (1841-1900)

According to Ancestry.com, after Elizabeth McDowell died, August John Felkey married Thursey Johnson in 1852. He then married Catherine Weider in 1856. They had two children.

Charles W. Felkey (1857-1871)

George H. Felkey (1860-1861)

James McDowell (1815-1880) Home

Unfortunately, his house at the southwest corner of 2nd and Maple streets is no longer standing. It was torn down sometime before 1954. The house faced Maple Street. A photograph of this house was provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834).

The photo is believed to be circa 1887. The woman in the photo is Frances Wilson McDowell (1824-1900). The girl is her granddaughter Gertrude Mertilla McDowell (1878-1974).

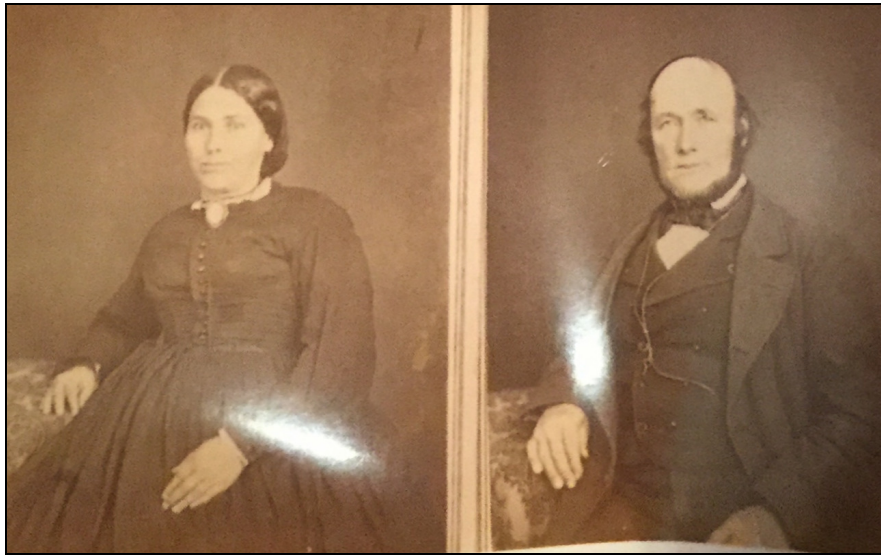


Additional Photographs of James McDowell (1815-1880)

A photograph of James McDowell (1815-1880) from the 1888 history book was shown earlier in this book.

Additional photographs of James McDowell (1815-1880) and his wife Frances Wilson McDowell (1824-1900) were provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834).

The first pair of photographs show the couple when they were younger in age.



The second pair of photographs show the couple when they were older in age.



Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904)

Woodford G. McDowell probably led the most colorful life of any of William McDowell's children. He was a self-taught lawyer, became a County Judge, was a real estate speculator, helped to name and start Fairbury, Nebraska, was married three times, and was buried in Washington, DC.

His biography from the 1878 history book is shown below.

WOODFORD G. McDOWELL, attorney at law and dealer in real-estate, Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 3, 1818, but removed to Indiana in childhood, with his parents, who settled in Tippecanoe Co., that State, in 1828; in 1832, he came with his father and uncle and brother James, to Illinois, arriving in what is now Avoca Tp., this county, May 2; here they planted some corn and commenced other preparations for a home; but on account of the Indian troubles (Black Hawk War) they returned to their homes in Indiana the same month, where they remained until the following November, then returning with his father's family to their former possessions in this State, where they began pioneer life, which is more fully set forth in the history of Avoca Tp. The subject of this sketch was appointed Master in Chancery by Judge T. Lyle Dickey in 1844; elected Judge of the County Court in 1859; served for fourteen years as Justice of the Peace, and owing (as the Judge says) to good luck, he was sustained, during this period, in all of his decisions in cases of appeal; has also held other minor offices; owns 320 acres of

land in this county, valued at \$14,400, and 2,000 acres in Nebraska, valued at \$20,000.

His first marriage was in 1842, to Elizabeth Lane; she was born near Danville, Ill., died in October, 1866; eight children by this union, only three of whom are living-Sarah L. wife of L. C. Champlin, of Fairbury, Neb., Eliza J. (wife of O. H. Phillips, of St. Joe, Mo.), and Mary C.; lost five--Nancy A., died Sept. 24, 1845; Willis P., Aug 15, 1849, Elizabeth K., Oct 29, 1851; Orpha A.L., Oct. 28, 1854; Alice E., Aug 9, 1857.

Was again married in 1867, to Marion L. Stone, who was born in Maryland, near Washington City; she died in 1874; his marriage to his present wife, Anna C. Mitchell, took place in November of that year; her birth-place was Scioto Co., Ohio.

Judge Woodford G. McDowell was married three times. The first wife was Elizabeth Lane (1823-1865). He married her March 31, 1842 in Danville, Illinois.

The second wife was Marion L. Stone (1818-1874). She died in 1874, so later that same year he married Anna Elizabeth Chandler (1840-1910) on November 26, 1874, in Chicago.

Judge Woodford G. McDowell only had children with his first wife.

The following photograph, of Judge Woodford G. McDowell, was provided by a descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834).



Judge Woodford G. McDowell and first wife Elizabeth Lane had eight children.

Sarah Lavisa McDowell (1843-1883)

Nancy A. McDowell (1843-1845)

Willis P. McDowell (1843-1849)

Eliza Jane McDowell (1847-1918)

Elizabeth K. McDowell (1850-1851)

Orpha L. McDowell (1852-1854)

Alice E. McDowell (1857-1857)

Mary K. "Kate" McDowell (1859-1940)

Sarah Lavisa McDowell married Lewis C. Champlin (1840-1889).

Sarah died in Fairbury, Nebraska.

Eliza Jane McDowell married Oregon H. Phillips (1844-1897).

Mary K. "Kate" McDowell (1859-1940) married George Bourelle in 1888 in Washington, DC.

A photograph of Mary K. "Kate" McDowell was provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) and is shown below. The locket she is wearing in the photograph is shown below her photo. Although not easily visible, there are seed pearls in the locket.



Woodford G. McDowell Obituary

September 23, 1904, Fairbury Blade

OBITUARY - Woodford G. McDowell was born in Scioto Co., OH, Feb 3, 1818 and died at his home 1420 Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, D. C., Sept 10, 1904. In 1832 he moved with his parents to Livingston Co. IL where his father took up claims for himself and family on the Vermillion River. There were only 5 settlers within a radius of 30 miles and during the Black Hawk War they were obliged to take temporary refuge in Indiana.

Their post office was Bloomington, 35 miles away; their nearest store was Ottawa, 45 miles; and they traveled 80 miles entirely by compass to Chicago. There was no church or school in that part of the country. Being devoted Methodists, they did not rest until the pioneer church was organized, the Vermillion mission established by Wm. Royal in 1835.

In July 1833 the family attended camp meeting at Mackinaw (now Lexington), 20 miles away. The day was exceeding hot and dry, the ox teams gave out and had to be driven into a pond of water and allowed to remain until sundown. They were only 3 miles from home, no road or trail, no house in the 17 miles that laid before them. Traveling by day was abandoned and they finished the journey by night, directing their course by the stars. Next morning they arrived at their destination and enjoyed a glorious camp meeting.

During his long and useful life, Judge W. G. McDowell filled many positions of trust and responsibilities in the M. E. Church and took an active part in the organization and building of new churches in IL and NE. He studied law in Livingston Co. and was admitted to the bar and in 1860 moved to Fairbury, Illinois. He filled several

political offices among them Master of Chancery and County Judge. He was a friend of Lincoln, Weldon, Stevenson and many of the early political leaders of Illinois.

In 1887 he retired from active business and professional life and moved to Washington, D. C. where he became a devoted member of Metropolitan M. E. Church and was especially interested in the Methodist Home of the Aged and the Woman's Home Missionary Society being a trustee of Rust Hall.

The funeral services were held at his home on Tuesday afternoon, Sept 13th, his pastor Dr. Frank M. Bristol officiating, assisted by Dr. Gallagher, president of Rust Hall and Rev. A.H. Ames, a former president. In his remarks at the service, Dr. Bristol said "Judge McDowell could have seen all the presidents of the US except Washington...he has lived in a wonderful age...he was a gentlemen of the old school, combining the gentle tenderness of a mother with the manliness of a strong legal mind. His Christian influence was felt by all." His peaceful end was a beautiful close to a beautiful life as he passed beyond to receive the welcome "well done good and faithful servant."

Judge McDowell is survived by a widow and two daughters, Mrs. E. J. Phillips of Seattle, WA and Mrs. George Burrell of Bloomington, IL and an adopted daughter, Miss M. Elizabeth Mellor of Washington, D.C. He also leaves several grandchildren and a brother, Joseph B. McDowell of Fairbury, NE.

Woodford G. McDowell House

The home of Woodford G. McDowell still stands in Fairbury on Maple street. The earliest known photograph of this home is circa 1887. This photograph was provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) and is shown below.



Hiram M. McDowell (1822-1884)

Hiram married Sarah Ann Fairchild (1829-1897). They had eight children.

Oliver H. P. McDowell (1848-1927)
Joseph B. McDowell (1848-1848)
John F. McDowell (1850-1920)
Everett E. McDowell (1852-1917)
Americus V. McDowell (1854-1910)
Viguetta C. McDowell (1856-1856)
William O. McDowell (1859-1860)
Hattie B. McDowell (1861-1864)

Hannah D. McDowell (1823-1844)

Hannah married John Blue (1815-1849). They had one child, John L. Blue (1842-1926).

Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916)

Joseph Blair McDowell married Catherine Campbell (1830-1864). They had five children in Avoca. Catherine died giving birth to twins in 1864.

Nelson L. McDowell (1856-1937)
Mary Frances "Fannie" McDowell (1859-1942)
Josephine Rebecca "Josie" McDowell (1861-1898)
Joseph E. McDowell (1864-1864)
Catherine McDowell (1864-1864) Twin to Joseph E. McDowell

All these three children from his first marriage later moved with him to Nebraska.

Joseph Blair McDowell next married Harriet Packer (circa 1847-1871)

They had three children.

Frederick F. McDowell (1866-sometime between 1916 and 1937)

Woodford P. McDowell (1867-1932)

Jay B. McDowell (1870-1962)

Joseph Blair McDowell next married Gertrude McKenzie (unknown-unknown). They had two children.

Cora McDowell (1876-1967)

Clyde McDowell (1878-sometime after 1944)

Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916) moved from Fairbury, Illinois to Fairbury, Nebraska. He was one of the pioneering citizens of Fairbury, Nebraska.

When he was 90 years old, the Nebraska State Journal newspaper published a story celebrating his 90th birthday on September 5, 1915.

PIONEER NINETY YEARS OLD

J. B. MCDOWELL OF FAIRBURY OBSERVES BIRTHDAY.

Heard Douglas-Lincoln Debates—Served Two Terms In State Legislature.

FAIRBURY, Neb., Sept. 4.—Joseph B. McDowell, the pioneer of Fairbury, celebrated his ninetieth birthday anniversary Wednesday, September 1, at his home, 417 H street in

company with his wife, Nelson McDowell, a son, and Miss Cora, his daughter. During the day and in the evening many relatives and friends called to remind "Uncle Joe" that he had reached another milestone on his journey.

His life has been one of a pioneer. He was born in Scioto county, Ohio, on the first day of September, 1825, and emigrated at the age of three years to Tippecanoe County, Ind. At the age of seven the family pushed west, landing at what afterwards became known as Avoca, Ill. The family then lived twenty miles from a blacksmith shop, thirty-five miles from a post office, and fifty miles from a mill.

As a boy he listened to the famous debates between Lincoln and Douglas in 1840 during the presidential campaign and kept in touch with those intellectual giants until death closed the active life of each. He pushed west across the Mississippi River and with his brother, Woodford, homesteaded the land whereon stands the thriving city of Fairbury.

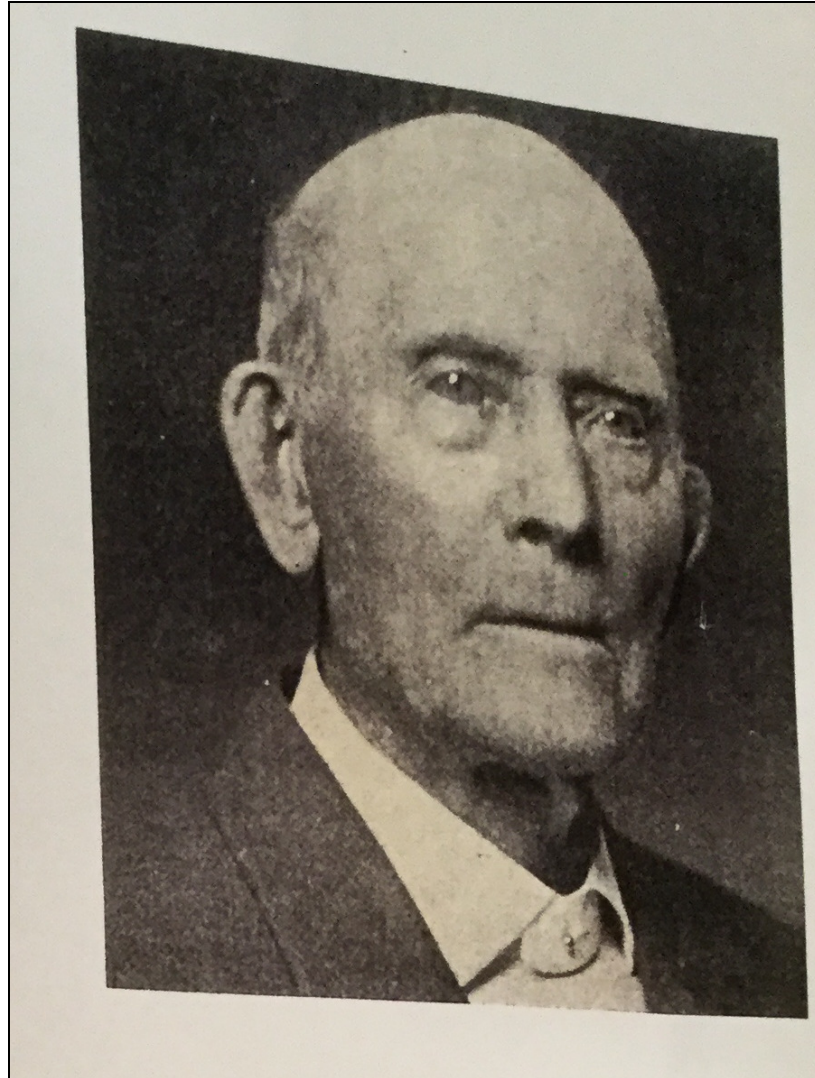
The brothers bought land around Beatrice and built the first hotel at that place. A year later he moved his family to Beatrice. In 1872 he was elected to the state legislature and re-elected in 1874. A year later came the election of United States senator. Mr. McDowell was at that time one of the leading republican politicians of Nebraska and served as campaign manager for A. S. Paddock of Beatrice, who was elected United States senator after a spirited contest with Judge Dandy and John M. Thayer as competitors. As a reward for his services he was appointed register of the United States land office at Lincoln, a position he filled for six

years. About this time, 1875, he bought an interest in the Fairbury mill. That was forty years ago. The mill has changed managers many times since, but "Uncle Joe" has always retained his interest in the business.

He has the distinction of being the oldest Nebraska State Journal reader. He subscribed for the first copy of The Journal ever published and has taken it continuously up to the present time. His health is good. That he furnished The Journal correspondent much of the data for this story is proof of a very remarkable memory for one nearing the century mark.

A photograph of Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916) accompanied the obituary. Unfortunately, the resolution of the photograph is not good enough to include in this book.

A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834), provided a higher resolution photograph of Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916). This photograph is shown below.



Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916) had a son, Nelson L. McDowell (1856-1937), who moved with him to Nebraska. The obituary for Nelson L. McDowell (1856-1937) was published by the Lincoln Star on October 10, 1937.

**The Late Nelson L. McDowell, Fairbury
Pioneer, Unusually Colorful Character**

BY LUCILE JENKINS.

Nelson L. McDowell, Fairbury pioneer recently killed when his car was hit by the early morning motor at a Fairbury crossing, has made his two Jefferson County tenants, Arthur and Paul Zimmerman, a gift of a quarter section each of his land west of Fairbury which they have been farming for the past 18 years.

"They have never cheated me out of a penny," Mr. McDowell is reported to have said. The deeds inside sealed envelopes have reposed in a bank deposit box since 1933, having been executed by Mr. McDowell in 1928. When the German tenant brothers were presented with the envelopes by the administrator and learned their contents, they were speechless with gratitude. A third quarter adjoining the Zimmerman land is bequeathed to relatives.

A memorandum left by Mr. McDowell expresses the wish that 480 acres of his land, the Rose creek farm south of Fairbury, become the property of the state of Nebraska for a public park.

Carved Mausoleum.

It is on this land, the McDowell home farm, that Nelson McDowell amused himself during spare time in carving a mausoleum out of the sandstone hill on the brink of Rose creek. The place has an ante-room and inside are 6 foot shelves jokingly designated as a final resting places for himself and his farm neighbor, Cliff Hunter. For years people from a wide radius thronged to this spot. On the rocks near the mausoleum were carved in the sandstone Pulpit Rock, Lover's Lane, Devil's Slide, and on the side of the hill which overlooks many miles of the county in all directions, the name Lookout mountain. Well trodden paths led through the lovely wooded section. In recent years, however, the rustic bridge which is the only road approach to the spot, has become impassable.

Owned Early Auto.

Mr. McDowell owned one of the first automobiles in Fairbury. He continued to own the same machine while many of his friends ran the gauntlet from lowly makes to the best, and some of them back again. Every day he shined the brass on his gas buggy, and rain or shine, every day for years he took the trip between his splendid cornfields, across the rustic bridge and up the sharp little hill to look over his farm. For many years, Nelson McDowell in his shining car was one of the sights of the county.

Nelson McDowell was the son of the late J. B. McDowell, once state legislator, Fairbury and Beatrice pioneer. He was also the nephew of Judge Woodford Mc Dowell, founder of Fairbury. In the early 1900's he was deputy

secretary of state. He used to carry a simple lunch and eat on a bench which he had made with his own hands under a fine elm tree at the old state capitol grounds. At one time during his tenure of office, plans called for the cutting down of this tree. Mr. McDowell protested vigorously, and all other efforts having failed, rumor has it that he persuaded the woodman to "spare that tree" at the point of his gun. However, Mr. McDowell was a mild mannered and humorous person, and probably prevailed on the work men without resorting to firearms. At any rate, the tree was left that he might enjoy his daily lunch in peace.

Although having no financial worries, Mr. McDowell was always busy. One task he enjoyed doing for his home town was the building of a stone wall near the Blue river bridge which helped prevent high water from flowing over a stretch of road there. The city furnished the material, and early and late Nelson worked on the stone wall until it was finished—for the sheer love of labor and usefulness.

From the cafe where Mr. McDowell had taken his meals for many years, Mrs. O. G. Savage, the proprietor's wife, carried him his big drinking goblet. It contained two and one half ordinary glasses of water and saved the services of the waitress, he said. The goblet full of water sat at his place every meal. "No one else will be needing this glass," she said sadly.

Anecdotes of this character are numerous, and many which show his generosity and general like-ability will never be told because of his antipathy to self exploitation. The only appeal which won the right to publish any of his doings during his lifetime was to his sense of humor.

Fairbury and Jefferson counties will miss Nelson McDowell, straight and lithe as an Indian despite his 80 years, his face crinkled with the joy of living as he greeted friends everywhere.

CHAPTER 5

The John McDowell (1792-1843) Family

The second brother who's family moved to the Fairbury, Illinois area was John McDowell (1792-1843).

John McDowell (1792-1843)

John McDowell married Elizabeth Price on January 7, 1819, in Scioto, Ohio. According to Ancestry.com, they had nine children.

1. Jackson McDowell (1819-1843)
2. Sarah Ann McDowell (1821-1859)
3. Isaac Price McDowell (1824-1901)
4. Oliver Perry McDowell (1827-1912)
5. Nelson Scott McDowell (1829-1878)
6. Mary E. McDowell (1832-1918)
7. James M. McDowell (1835-1863)
8. John Van McDowell (1838-1861)
9. William H.H. McDowell (1840-1908)

The 1888 history book includes a biography on I.P. McDowell. This biography includes information about his extended family as well.

ISAAC P. McDOWELL, President of the First National Bank of Fairbury, and one of the leading men of Livingston County, was born on the 17th of August, 1824, in Scioto County, Ohio, and is the son of John and Elizabeth (Price) McDowell, the former a native of Woodford County. Ky., and the latter of Chillicothe, Ohio.

The father was born on the 1st of January, 1792, and died on the 16th of January, 1843, in the State of Indiana, he having moved to Montgomery County in that State in 1828. He was a farmer by occupation, and for many years filled the office of Justice of the Peace, and other township offices. He and his wife were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which he was a Steward, and his dwelling was a place of worship for some years before church buildings had been established in that section of the county.

The mother was born on the 30th of October, 1798, and died on the 10th of October, 1880, in Fairbury, Ill. There were nine children: Jackson died at the age of twenty-two; Sarah A., Isaac P., Oliver P., Nelson S., Mary E., James M., John V. and William H. H. The latter was born in March, 1840, during the Harrison campaign, which accounts doubtless for his name.

Isaac P. McDowell was married, June 10, 1855, to Miss Jane Russell, born in Pickaway County, Ohio, in 1834. She is the daughter of William and Elizabeth (McArthur) Russell. Her father came from Virginia in early times, and settled in Ohio, where the capital of the State, Columbus, now stands. Mr. McDowell came to Illinois in 1850, and located four miles north of Fairbury, where he remained three years and then went to Pontiac, in which place he built the first

business house of any consequence, which was occupied by the firm of Ladd, McDowell & McGregor, which they filled with goods to the amount of \$20,000.

Theirs were the first goods shipped on the Chicago & Alton Railroad to Pontiac, after it was finished through in June, 1854. Mr. McDowell remained in the firm two years, when he disposed of his interest and returned to his farm, where he remained until the spring of 1864, when he came to Fairbury and joined his brother. Nelson S. McDowell, in the dry-goods business, continuing in this business for four years, and in the spring of 1872 established the First National Bank of Fairbury with a capital of \$50,000, of which bank he has continuously held the Presidency.

Mr. and Mrs. McDowell have had six children, five of whom are living: Lillian died in infancy; Thomas S. O., Elmer E., John V., Eva and Lura. Thomas S. O. McDowell was elected Cashier of the First National Bank when in his nineteenth year, being the youngest National Bank Cashier in the United States: he has occupied that position ten years. Elmer E. was Assistant Cashier of this bank for three years, and on the 1st of May, 1886, became a Director and Cashier of the First National Bank at Fairbury, Neb., the county seat of Jefferson County, in which bank the McDowell family have an interest, his brother, John V., taking his place in the Illinois bank.

Thomas S. O. married in 1882, Miss Rose Cook, born in Richmond, Ind., in 1862, and has one child. Rose Lenore, now twenty months old. Thomas S. O. has been City Treasurer for a number of years, also one of the Aldermen for several years, and is now City Clerk. Mrs. McDowell is the daughter of an old-time resident and representative family of Richmond, Ind., and a woman of refinement and education.

Isaac P. McDowell and his wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he has been a Steward for many years. At the age of sixteen he engaged in teaching, and continued for thirteen years, his brothers and sisters all going to school to him. He is an ardent Republican, and in 1867-68 purchased the Fairbury Journal to keep it from falling into the hands of the Democrats, and when the right man came along he sold it, to be published as a Republican paper in the future.

The 1878 history book has a biography about O.P. McDowell.

OLIVER P. McDOWELL, hardware, stoves, tin ware and agricultural implements, Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 7, 1827, but removed to Indiana in early childhood with his parents, who settled in Tippecanoe Co. in 1828; afterward removing to Montgomery Co., that State, where the subject of this sketch resided until his removal to Avoca Tp., this county, in the Fall of 1850; he

engaged in farming, which occupation he followed for several years; removed to Fairbury, his present home, in the Spring of 1865; owns 700 acres of land, valued at \$35,000.

In 1853, he was married to Miss Emily M. Myer, who was born in Maryland, March 25, 1832; seven children by this union- Osmer N., born March 7, 1854; Laura C. (wife of T. K. Blain), Sept. 27, 1856; Emma, Oct. 13, 1858; Joseph E. L., Jan. 26, 1863; .Adda E., Oct. 27, 1864; Charles P., Aug. 5, 1867; Luella, March 7, 1870.

The 1888 history book has a biography about O.P. McDowell.

OLIVER P. McDOWELL, in the towns and villages of Illinois are many venerable men who desire to pass the remaining days of their lives where there is more bustle and activity than on a farm. These are men who have devoted many long years to opening and improving the country, and having attained the ends they sought in the occupation of farming, prefer to engage in other business where returns are quicker if not surer. They are the sterling men of the villages and towns, and their counsel and advice are often sought and always valuable.

The subject of this sketch is both a retired farmer and business man, and resides in Fairbury. He was born in Scioto County, Ohio, on the 7th of February, 1827, and is the son of John and Elizabeth (Price)

McDowell, with whom he remained on the farm doing his share of the work and attending the common schools until he reached his majority.

In 1850 he came to Illinois and located in Avoca Township, Livingston County, on the Vermilion River, where he purchased lands in the spring of 1850, which he occupied in the fall of the same year.

On the 2d of June, 1858, Mr. McDowell was married to Miss Emily Myers, who was born on the 25th of March, 1832, in the State of Maryland. She is the daughter of Eli and Catherine (Umphenour) Myers, natives of Maryland and Pennsylvania respectively. The father was a farmer by occupation, and came to Illinois in 1850, and was a Deacon of the Baptist Church for many years. He was born in 1796, and died in 1869 near Chenoa. The mother was also a member of the Baptist Church, and lived a true Christian life. She was born in 1809 and died in Illinois in 1875. They were the parents of eight children, of whom Mrs. McDowell was the oldest, and the others were: William A. married Eliza St. John; Joseph E. married Ruth St. John; Matilda married James McDowell, who was killed at Vicksburg, June 15, 1863, while a member of the 3d Illinois Cavalry, in which he enlisted in 1862; he left a wife, and one child, named Lillian, since deceased. Benjamin F. married Miss Sophia Macy; Samuel D. married Miss Ada St. John; Charles F. married Miss Lizzie Waggoner, and Nelson J. married Miss McElhany.

Mr. and Mrs. McDowell have had seven children—Osmer M., Laura C, Emma, Joseph E. L., Addie E., Charles P. and Luella.

In 1865 Mr. McDowell relinquished his occupation as a farmer and moved to Fairbury, where he engaged in wagon-making, in which business he remained one year and then engaged in the hardware business, which he conducted successfully for twenty years. In 1887 he disposed of this business and retired from active life. He owns some farm land in Livingston County, and has recently made some land purchases in Sherman County Kan.

Mr. McDowell is an active member of the Baptist Church, in the affairs of which he takes much interest. Mr. McDowell is a stanch Republican, and continues, as he has in the past, to give the men and measures of that party his hearty support. They have accumulated sufficient of means and property to make them comfortable during the remaining days of their lives.

The 1888 history book also has biographies about I.P. McDowell and W. H. H. McDowell.

H.H. McDOWELL, who is one of the leading members of the bar of Pontiac and Master in Chancery for Livingston County, is a native of Montgomery County, Ind., and was born on the 6th of March, 1840. He is the son of John and Elizabeth (Price) McDowell, respectively natives of Kentucky and Ohio; his father being a farmer by occupation. The latter died in Indiana, and after his death the mother, with her family, moved to Illinois in 1850 and settled in Livingston County. Of a family of nine children there are now only four living: Isaac P., President of the First National Bank of Fairbury, Livingston County; Oliver P., of Fairbury, now retired; Mary E., now Mrs. Ladd, of Pontiac, and H. H.

The subject of this sketch divided his time between working on a farm and attending school until he was seventeen years of age, when he returned to Indiana and entered the Thorntown Seminary, located in Boone County, about thirty-five miles north of Indianapolis, and remained there about three years.

In May, 1861, almost at the beginning of hostilities between the North and the South, Mr. McDowell enlisted in Company B, 17th Indiana Infantry, and remained in that regiment for nearly one year, when he returned home and assisted in organizing the 129th Illinois Infantry, of which regiment he was made Sergeant

Major, and subsequently was commissioned a Lieutenant of Company E. He participated in all the battles in which this regiment was engaged, and with a few picked men he captured the noted guerrilla chief, Capt. Burton, near Gallatin, Tenn. On account of his peculiar fitness for the position, he was detailed as an aid-de-camp to Brig. Gen. Harrison—who has since represented Indiana in the United States Senate—from Atlanta to Washington, and was mustered out in June, 1865.

After his return from the war Mr. McDowell engaged in mercantile business at Fairbury, making hardware a specialty. At this time he began to read law, and after three years of study was admitted to the bar in 1872; then he located in Pontiac, where he has since resided, and devoted his time to the practice of his profession. Mr. McDowell has been a member of the Board of Education for ten years, and by appointment of President Hayes was the Superintendent of the census of thirteen counties in 1880. He is the attorney for the First National Bank of Fairbury, and in his practice is generally on one side or the other of all the important causes tried in the Livingston County Courts.

Mr. McDowell was married on the 1st of January, 1866, to Miss Emma C. Thayer, a native of New York, and daughter of Dr. Gilbert Thayer, President of the Morgan Park Female College, of Cook County, Ill. They have an interesting family of four

children—Julia M., Louis Donald,
William Thayer and Isaac Price.

Mr. McDowell is a Republican, and during the campaign preaches the doctrines of that party upon all proper occasions. He is an enthusiastic comrade of the G. A. R. He and his wife are both members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and take a lively interest in the affairs of that body. From the success he has attained in the past the prophecy of a brilliant career in the future of Mr. McDowell is amply justified.

ISAAC P. McDOWELL, President of the First National Bank of Fairbury, and one of the leading men of Livingston County, was born on the 17th of August, 1824, in Scioto County, Ohio, and is the son of John and Elizabeth (Price) McDowell, the former a native of Woodford County, Ky., and the latter of Chillicothe, Ohio.

The father was born on the 1st of January, 1792, and died on the 16th of January, 1843, in the State of Indiana, he having moved to Montgomery County in that State in 1828. He was a farmer by occupation, and for many years filled the office of Justice of the Peace, and other township offices. He and his wife were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which he was a Steward, and his dwelling was a place of worship for some years before church buildings had been established in that section of county.

The mother was born on the 30th of October, 1798, and died on the 10th of October, 1880, in Fairbury, Ill. There were nine children: Jackson died at the age of twenty-two; Sarah A., Isaac P., Oliver P., Nelson S., Mary E., James M., John V. and William H. H. The latter was born in March, 1840, during the Harrison campaign, which accounts doubtless for his name.

Isaac P. McDowell was married, June 10, 1855, to Miss Jane Russell, born in Pickaway County, Ohio, in 1834. She is the daughter of William and Elizabeth (McArthur) Russell. Her father came from Virginia in early times, and settled in Ohio, where the capital of the State, Columbus, now stands. Mr. McDowell came to Illinois in 1850, and located four miles north of Fairbury, where he remained three years and then went to Pontiac, in which place he built the first business house of any consequence, which was occupied by the firm of Ladd, McDowell & McGregor, which they filled with goods to the amount of \$20,000.

Theirs were the first goods shipped on the Chicago & Alton Railroad to Pontiac, after it was finished through in June, 1854. Mr. McDowell remained in the firm two years, when he disposed of his interest and returned to his farm, where he remained until the spring of 1864, when he came to Fairbury and joined his brother. Nelson S. McDowell, in the dry-goods business, continuing in this business for four years, and in the spring

of 1872 established the First National Bank of Fairbury with a capital of \$50,000, of which bank he has continuously held the Presidency.

Mr. and Mrs. McDowell have had six children, five of whom are living: Lillian died in infancy; Thomas S. O., Elmer E., John V., Eva and Lura. Thomas S. O. McDowell was elected Cashier of the First National Bank when in his nineteenth year, being the youngest National Bank Cashier in the United States; he has occupied that position ten years. Elmer E. was Assistant Cashier of this bank for three years, and on the 1st of May, 1886, became a Director and Cashier of the First National Bank at Fairbury, Neb., the county seat of Jefferson County, in which bank the McDowell family have an interest, his brother, John V., taking his place in the Illinois bank.

Thomas S. O. married in 1882, Miss Rose Cook, born in Richmond, Ind., in 1862, and has one child. Rose Lenore, now twenty months old. Thomas S. O. has been City Treasurer for a number of years, also one of the Aldermen for several years, and is now City Clerk. Mrs. McDowell is the daughter of an old-time resident and representative family of Richmond, Ind., and a woman of refinement and education.

Isaac P. McDowell and his wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he has been a Steward

for many years. At the age of sixteen he engaged in teaching, and continued for thirteen years, his brothers and sisters all going to school to him. He is an ardent Republican, and in 1867-68 purchased the Fairbury Journal to keep it from falling into the hands of the Democrats, and when the right man came along he sold it, to be published as a Republican paper in the future.

Now we will summarize the lives of each of the children.

Jackson McDowell (1819-1843)

Died at age 24, never married.

Sarah Ann McDowell (1821-1859)

She married William T. Russell. She died in Pontiac, Illinois, at age 38. According to the 1850 U.S. Census, they had three children.

Jerome Russell

Alvina Russell

Lura Russell

Isaac Price McDowell (1824-1901)

He married Jane Russell (1834-1890) and they had six children.

Lillian McDowell (1856-1857)

Thomas S.O. McDowell (1858-1911)

Elmer E. McDowell (1862-1918)

John Van McDowell (1864-1917)

Eva M. McDowell (1865-1919)

Lutie McDowell (1874-1934)

He was a businessman and banker. His sons Thomas Scot O'Neil (TSO) McDowell and Elmer E. McDowell also worked as bankers, including the Fairbury, Nebraska bank.

A special 1898 edition of the Blade has a photo of son John Van McDowell's (1864-1917) residence.



Oliver Perry McDowell (1827-1912)

He married Emily Myer (1832-1888). They had seven children.

Osmer N. McDowell (1854-1903)

Laura C. McDowell (1856-1938)

Emma McDowell (1858-1937)

Joseph Eli McDowell (1863-1936)

Addie E. McDowell (1864-1948)

Charles Perry McDowell (1867-1942)

Luella McDowell (1870-1951)

Farmer, wagon-maker, hardware store owner. His wife, Emily Myer, was a sister to Matilda Myer. Matilda married Oliver Perry McDowell's brother, James M. McDowell (1835-1863), who was killed in the Civil War.

Nelson Scott McDowell (1829-1878)

He married Susan E. Roop (1843-1914). They had three children.

Jessie McDowell (1863-1930)

Frank C. McDowell (1867-1934)

Nelson Roop McDowell (1870-1921)

Mary E. McDowell (1832-1918)

She married Samuel C. Ladd (1820-1878) in Pontiac, Illinois. They had seven children.

Wareham W. Ladd (1854-1854)

Ellie Amelia Ladd (1856-1857)

William P. Ladd (1858-1882)

John M. Ladd (1861-1900)

Mary Emma Ladd (1864-1898)

Abbie H. Ladd (1868-1953)

Samuel C. Ladd (1874-1875)

Samuel C. Ladd, a native of Connecticut, arrived in Pontiac in the year 1842. An educated man, Ladd started the first school in Pontiac. Lacking an official school building, Mr. Ladd and his students met in the original Livingston County Courthouse until a dedicated school house could be built. Ladd was later honored by having a street and one of Pontiac's grade schools named after him. For additional information about Samuel C. Ladd, see the 1878 history book.

James M. McDowell (1835-1863)

He married Matilda Myer (1839-1891), sister of Emily Myer. Emily Myer was Oliver Perry McDowell's wife. They had two children.

Lillian Evelyn McDowell (1860-1875)

James M. McDowell (1861-1893)

James M. McDowell served in the 7th Cavalry, Company K. He died at Helena, Arkansas, on September 13, 1862. He was 27 years old when he died.

For more information about James M. McDowell's Civil War service, see the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois and the Civil War*.

John Van McDowell (1838-1861)

The Indiana Civil War database, <https://tinyurl.com/y8bvjxoe>, reports that he was a member of the Indiana 17th Infantry, Company B. He was killed on December 29, 1861, at Grafton, West Virginia.

William H.H. McDowell (1840-1908)

He married Emma C. Thayer (1846-1915). They had five children.

Julia M. McDowell (1867-1930)

Gilbert H. McDowell (1873-unknown)

Lewis D. McDowell (1875-1923)

William G. McDowell (1879-1932)

Isaac Price McDowell (1882-1947)

William H. H. McDowell served in the Fairbury unit, the 129th Infantry, Company E, in the Civil War. For more information about his Civil War service, see the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois and the Civil War*.

CHAPTER 6

The Thomas G. McDowell (1806-1896) Family

The third brother who came later to the Fairbury area was Thomas G. McDowell (1806-1898).

He is referenced in the 1878 history book.

Thomas G. McDowell, a younger brother of Wm. McDowell, came to Illinois in 1848. He settled out on the prairie, about half a mile from the timber, and was the first actual settlement made outside of the timber. It was spoken of in considerable wonderment, and the people used to say that "Uncle Tommy McDowell had settled away out on the prairie," which was looked upon then as equivalent to being "out of creation."

He states that when he came to Avoca there were but three settlements between the Wabash country and this place. The people did their milling at Green's mill, on the Fox River, and their store trading at Ottawa. His first trip to mill was to the one above mentioned, and he was four days in making it. He contracted to take twenty-five bushels of grain to mill and have it ground for a man in the neighborhood, for which he was to receive fifty bushels of corn, worth then the enormous sum of ten cents per bushel.

He also has a biography in the 1878 history book.

THOMAS G. McDOWELL; retired farmer; P. O. Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 1, 1806, where he resided until 1822, then removing to what is now West Virginia and engaged in the manufacture of salt. Was married, in 1835, to Miss Elizabeth C. Keeney; she was born in Greenbrier Co., Va., June 13, 1807; they have seven children living- Ann E., Franklin C., Moses K., Sarah F. (wife of J.M. Zook), Mary V. (wife of D. R. Morgan), Martha E. (wife of Thomas Brownlee), and Carrie E. In 1836 he removed to Indiana, locating in Montgomery Co., and engaged in farming; removed to Illinois in the Fall of 1848, reaching his place of destination, Avoca Tp., this county, Nov. 1.

He also has a portrait of his life in the 1888 history book.

THOMAS G. McDOWELL, one of the oldest and most highly esteemed citizens of Livingston County, is the subject of this sketch, and is now a citizen of the town of Fairbury. He was born on the 1st of February, 1806, in Scioto County, Ohio, and was reared on his father's farm, obtaining his education in log school houses, the only kind of educational edifices the country afforded in those days. His parents were James and Sarah (Gorrel) McDowell. James was a native of Scotland, and came to America with his parents when a child. The father was a farmer by occupation, and his parents

located in Pennsylvania, where James was married to Sarah Gorrel in the year 1789, after five or six years' service in the Revolutionary War.

About 1795 the father went to Kentucky with the veritable Simon Kenton, which was the first visit that famous frontiersman made to Kentucky. He and Kenton pre-empted a large tract of land, which was called Mason, and afterward Woodford County. The father moved from Kentucky to Ohio in 1804, and located in Scioto County, where he entered land and cleared a large farm, and remained until his death. The father was born in 1742 and died in 1809. They had a family of nine children, the subject of this sketch being the youngest and now the only survivor.

The names of the children were as follows: Mary married Thomas Phillips; William married Sarah Dever; Betsey was unmarried; John married Elizabeth Price; James married Sophia Hall; Woodford G. married Catherine Bennett; Martha married Henry Crull; Hiram married Elizabeth Sawders.

Thomas McDowell was married, on the 1st of January, 1835, to Elizabeth C. Keeney, who was born in Virginia in 1807, and is the daughter of Moses and Frances (Harris) Keeney, both natives of Virginia, and life-long members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the age of eighteen years Mr. McDowell concluded to depend upon his own

resources for a living, and he made a visit to the Kanawha Salt Works in West Virginia, where he secured employment at making salt and worked from 1824 to 1836 at that place.

On the 1st of October, 1836, he loaded all his worldly goods into a three-horse wagon, and with his wife started for the West. They stopped in Montgomery County, Ind., where he had purchased land some years previous to that time, and moved into a hewed log house 16x18 feet in dimensions, which he had erected the winter before. His land proved to be of excellent quality and very productive, and he remained on this farm of 120 acres until 1848, and then sold out and started farther west.

Arriving in Livingston County he purchased 120 acres of school and State lands, on which he built a house and then began farming. This farm was one mile from timber, and was thought to be almost out of the world. In 1867 he sold his land and moved into Fairbury, where he has since resided, living in one of the pleasant residences of the town, which he has surrounded with many comforts.

Mr. McDowell's family consists of seven children: Ann Eliza, living with her parents; Franklin C. married Laura Morgan; Moses K. married Miss Morgan; Sarah F. married M. J. Zook; Mary B. married William Morgan; Martha E. married Thomas Brownlee, and Carrie E. married James H Handy.

Since 1836 Mr. McDowell and his family have been members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and during that long period he and his wife have been regular in their attendance and sincere in their profession. Mr. McDowell has always been a straight out Republican, and his devotion and loyalty to the party have never diminished the least since the day he joined it in 1856.

Thomas G. McDowell's Children

Anne Elizabeth McDowell (1837-1892) never married.

Franklin C. McDowell (1839-1904) married Laura M. Morgan (1850-1943). They had two children.

Lannes McDowell (1870-1873)
Estella McDowell (1872-1876).

Moses K. McDowell (1841-1913) married Mary M. Morgan (1839-1881). They had two children.

Frank McDowell (1868-1911)
Thomas Clarence McDowell (1876-after 1913)

Moses moved from Fairbury to Gibson City in 1873. His obituary appeared in the May 6, 1913, Gibson City Gazette.

OBITUARY.

M. K. McDowell.

The funeral of M. K. McDowell was held from his late home on Church Street at 2 o'clock last Saturday afternoon and was well attended by relatives and friend's of the departed pioneer citizen. Rev. Ernest L. Pletcher of the M. E. church delivered the funeral sermon and had charge of the services at the house. Music was furnished by a male quartette. The services at the grave were in charge of the local lodge of the Masonic order, of which the decedent was long an honored member. Honorary pall bearers at the funeral were S. J. LeFevre, P. C. McCay, V. G. Way, Wm. Simms, J. M. Pendergast and B. L. Newcomb.

Moses K. McDowell was born in Lafayette, Indiana on April 13, 1841, and died shortly after midnight in Gibson City, Illinois, on Thursday May 8, 1913. His death was due, it is thought, to acute indigestion, his last illness coming but a few minutes before death came. At the time of his death he was 72 years and 25 days old.

He was the younger son of Thomas G. and Elizabeth Kenney McDowell. In 1848 the family moved from Indiana to Livingston county, Illinois. Here he grew to young manhood and after the outbreak of the Civil War enlisted for terms of a few months in the 69th and 128th Illinois regiments. Mr. McDowell's grandfather, James McDowell, was a soldier under General Wayne in the Revolutionary War and was wounded at Brandywine.

After the war Mr. McDowell was married to Miss Mary Morgan, and to this union two sons were born, Thomas McDowell, now of Neenah, Wis., and Frank C. McDowell, who died a few years ago. He is survived by his wife and the one son and by three sisters, Mrs. Mattie Bromlee of this city, Mrs. Jennie V. Morgan of Lake City, Iowa, and Mrs. Cary Burke of Peoria. Two other sisters preceded him in death, one of them being Mrs. J. M. Zook. His brother, F. C. McDowell, passed away in this city on October 20, 1904.

In October, 1873; Mr. McDowell and his brother Frank and their families, moved from Fairbury to this city, which was then a struggling little village. They embarked in the meat business, in which they remained for many years, having a good trade and making a wide acquaintance with the people in this section. After retiring from the meat market business, they engaged in the buying and selling of livestock and did a big business along this line. Several years ago, at about the time of his brother's death, Mr. McDowell retired, and since then had engaged in no business. He owned the store building rented by the LaFountain & Co. jewelry firm.

Mr. McDowell was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic and of the Masonic lodge. These were the only organizations with which he was affiliated at the time of his death.

Mr. McDowell played his part in the progress and development of Gibson City from the days when it was a village of a few hundred persons till the present time, when it is enjoying its greatest era of prosperity and improvement. As a business man he was successful and in the days

of his prime acquired a competence on which he lived in his declining years. Mr. McDowell was well liked and trusted and had many warm friends. In the home, in the lodge room and among a large circle of friends one is gone who will be missed and his death marks the rapid passing of that old group of sturdy pioneers who laid the foundation for Gibson City's present growth and prosperity.

Sarah F. McDowell (1843-1898) married John M. Zook (1836-1924). They had five children.

Thomas Zook (unknown-1888)
Jesse Burns Zook (1866-1943)
Edgar Curtis Zook (1868-1949)
Harry R. Zook (1876-1948)
Roy Othello Zook (1885-1958)

Mary Virginia McDowell (1845-1923) married David R. Morgan (1841-1902). They had three children.

Paul Revere Morgan (1878-1942)
Carrie Morgan (1880-unknown)
Geneva Morgan (1881-unknown)

Martha E. McDowell (1848-1935) married Thomas Brownlee (1844-1923). They had four children.

Robert Brownlee (1865-1900)
Molly A. Brownlee (1868-unknown)
Rolla A. Brownlee (1868-1933)
Raye Brownlee (1874-1967)

Elizabeth "Carrie" McDowell (1850-1929) married James Handy (1845-unknown). She then married John William Price. They had one daughter, Blythe Price.

She then married Alfred B. Burke (1863-1948).

CHAPTER 7

The Franklin Oliver Scandal

As Judge Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904) entered the latter stages of his life, he enjoyed a very good reputation. He had been a first settler, a founder of Avoca, a founder of the Pioneer Methodist Church, a founder of McDowell, a pillar of the Fairbury Methodists, the first lawyer and Justice of the Peace, a Judge of the County Court, an organizer and the first president of the Old Settlers' Association, a man of considerable wealth and great dignity.

This stellar reputation may have been damaged when he became involved with dealing with Franklin Oliver (1787-1881), a very colorful pioneer settler of Chatsworth, Illinois.

Alma Lewis James, in the first 1967 edition of her book *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars*, alleges that Judge McDowell's stellar reputation became so damaged, he had to leave Fairbury, Illinois, and move to Washington, DC.

CHAPTER XVIII

Old Man Oliver

Old Man Oliver was not a Fairburian, but he was well known there, and he was long a legendary figure throughout Central Illinois.

He was a quarter-part Indian, and was short and slender, with long black hair which turned white as he grew old, and he had an ability in profanity that was second to none. He lived in the woods south of the present town of Chatsworth, and for many years he was the sole white settler around there. One family, venturing into the territory, built a cabin fifteen miles away from him. Oliver

found out about it, and paid them a visit. With searing comments, he ordered them to move along, for he didn't fancy having neighbors living that close. Oliver enjoyed visiting, however, and always stopped at the William Fugate farm, at the Vermillion River ford, on his yearly trips to Ottawa to get his flour ground. Mrs. Fugate never failed to give him a good meal, but the men ate together alone, while she saw to it that the children remained out of earshot.

Old Man Oliver, or, more properly, Franklin Oliver, was born in New Jersey state, sometime around 1786. His father had been quartermaster in the Revolutionary War, and was a personal friend of Benjamin Franklin. His grandson, Orville Oliver, long-time owner of "Oliver's Grove", said Benjamin Franklin had given the Quartermaster a portrait of himself. Francis brought it with him when he started west, and prized it highly, especially as he kept five thousand dollars hidden in the back of it. He also brought his father's quartermaster papers and many documents of the Revolution, but these and the portrait were all lost in the fire that burned down his farm home.

According to the family legend, Oliver, with his wife and children, was headed for California when he came to this grove of trees which appealed to him as a camp site. He entered it, and immediately found himself surrounded by Indians. He drove his case knife into the nearest tree as a sign of peace, and the Kickapoos presently withdrew to their council fire to hold a pow-wow. Mrs. Oliver built a little fire of her own, and cooked supper for her family. After they had eaten, the Indians returned to conduct

him to their chief, who offered him their pipe of peace. Oliver was not a smoker, but he always said this was one time when he was glad to indulge. The family lived in a teepee at first, and then the Indians helped them build a log cabin.

They were friendly, but they were still suspicious of him, for the Black Hawk War was brewing. Caution compelled Oliver always to stay in plain sight where they could watch him easily. They did trust him sufficiently, however, to allow him to warn the settlers at Avoca. He was even able to arrange a meeting for them with the chief, and they got partial assurance for their safety if they left at once. This they were able to do, in spite of the fact that they were delayed for two days in plain sight of the warriors, while one of the women, Mrs. Jourdan, gave birth to a baby girl.

Oliver did not go back east with the other settlers, and this made him a marked man. He stayed there at the Grove during the war, coming and going with more or less freedom. The chief grew so fond of him he named his son for him. Later, Oliver gave the chief's name to the village of Saunemin. As a matter of fact, the Kickapoos did not appear especially hostile to the white settlers. They had been converted to Christianity by Reverend William Walker, a circuit rider from Ottawa. When Oliver came they were holding their own services, and they had prayer "books" with drawings to tell the stories, and walnut boards for covers.

Moreover, there was another white man who had won their special esteem. Major Darnall was one of the earliest settlers in the territory south of Fairbury, and his cabin was close to the trail the

Kickapoos used to go back and forth to their hunting grounds. Late one autumn, a little party of braves stopped at Darnall's cabin, and asked if they might leave their supply of maple sugar with him until they could pick it up again the next spring. They had a long, bitterly cold winter, and food became very scarce, but when the Indians called for their sugar, Darnall handed it to them intact, and they went their way marveling at the white man's scrupulous honesty. Years later, after the Kickapoos had been removed from the territory to a reservation in Oklahoma, Darnall finally admitted he had been mightily tempted to use the sugar, but he was stopped cold when he discovered it was thick with dog hairs.

The Kickapoos themselves were a fine-looking people, intelligent, industrious, and tolerably clean. Their women were far more beautiful than the average squaws. They all did the work, raised the crop of corn, beans, and potatoes, and dressed the game and fish their men brought home. There were about 700 in the tribe, and they had a council house and village by the river near the site of the future town of Fairbury, and the French used it as a trading post. The soil of the commons there was rich with arrow heads and other relics, but this was all covered over when the railroad hauled in dirt on flat cars and filled it four feet deep. The permanent Kickapoo village was at the Grove where they had built a large council house, with ninety-seven wigwams and several small encampments. The wigwams were made of the rushes which grew luxuriantly in the river bottoms, and they were carpeted with mats made of more of the same. Their relics showed that they made good utensils and weapons, and one ingenious hatchet had a hole

in the length of the handle and a pipe bowl in the head so that it could be used either for scalping or smoking.

The Kickapoos were renowned as a nation of warriors, and they had joined with the Miamies and Pottawatomies against the Confederation of the Illinois tribes in their last stand at the battle of Starved Rock, in 1774. Just one year later, the Kickapoos and Pottawatomies quarreled with the Miamies over the division of the territory they had won. In an effort to settle the dispute sensibly, each side chose three-hundred men to fight. The battle took place on the banks of Sugar Creek, south of their grove, and when it was over, there were just twelve men who were not killed or seriously wounded: five Miamies and seven Kickapoos. After that the Kickapoos and Pottawatomies divided the territory between them, the Kickapoos taking the portion to the east, and the boundary was marked by a trail which passed near Oliver's Grove. The trail averaged eight inches deep and fifteen inches wide, and traces of it exist even today. The Black Hawk War was over by the fall of 1832, and once the Indians were taken to the reservation, the white settlers began coming in to occupy the land. It was not officially surveyed until a year later, and everyone squatted wherever he chose, provided, of course, that no one else was occupying it previously.

Oliver had been left in possession of the Kickapoo village, and so he just stayed there; and, since he was a civil engineer and surveyor by profession, he received the job of surveying all that part of the country. He was in on the ground floor, and he could take his choice of land. He acquired over four thousand acres of

the best, most of it in timberland, for he wanted no other, and he was one of the great land owners of early Illinois. When the mail routes were established, his home was the post office, and then, as settlers became more numerous, it became a sort of inn offering shelter to travelers. So widespread was the sinister reputation of the place, that men lodging there for the night slept on their guns. There was supposed to be, hidden away in his timber, a great pile of iron wheel rims left over from the burning of many immigrant wagons, the owners of which were never seen again, and the tales of Oliver's robberies and murders were endless.

His very appearance supported the legends about him. His hair was white now, and since he wore it shoulder length, it had a breath-stopping, eerie look when blown by the wind. Fairbury children were in terror of his very name, for it was said that as each one of his children were born, he took his pocket knife and notched their ears, identifying them, like his animals, as his own. Pioneers were warned not to stop at Oliver's, but to keep on going until they got to Billy Fugate's. Sometimes the river was so high they could not ford it, and then they would have to make camp on the river bank until the water went down. Mrs. Fugate baked bread for them, and gave them milk and eggs, and they had an opportunity to rest in safety. If the current was not too swift, the travelers still were able to ford the flooded stream. They roped the wagon box securely to the running gear, so that it would not float away from the wheels, and drove it to a high bank above the ford. Everyone remained in their places in the wagon, while the horses, still harnessed to it, were driven to jump off the bank. They swam downstream until they came

to the regular ford and were able to walk out, still pulling their wagon and passengers.

Orville Oliver had an explanation for at least part of the rumors about his grandfather. Nimrod Maple, owner of a Fairbury harness shop, once told him that when he was a boy, he had gone hunting on Oliver's land around Chatsworth and Piper City. It was all marshes through there, and wild ducks and other game abounded. A rim of higher dry ground encircled this, but somewhere in the middle of the bog was a long stretch of quicksand, discovered when the land was tiled. Small animals could scoot across this area, but all the larger ones had to go around or be forever lost. Without a doubt, this quicksand was responsible for at least part of the disappearances attributed to Oliver.

His first wife had died long since. The second one, an Indian girl, passed away; and then, at the age of 65, he married a sixteen year old girl, and had children by her also. The poor wife had a stormy time of it. Divorce meant social ostracism then, but she finally hailed her ninety-year old husband into court and charged him with adultery, desertion, and failure to provide for his family for ten years. Upon his admission that it was all true, the court granted the divorce, awarded her four hundred acres of land in outright ownership, and gave her the custody of the minor children, the youngest of whom was eight.

Infuriated by this decision, Old Man Oliver deeded all his land to Judge Woodford McDowell, of Fairbury, and Judge Payson, of Pontiac, so that his former wife could not get hold of any of it. The bad feeling between Oliver

and his family grew to such fantastic proportions that, after one Saturday night when he was bound, choked and beaten, then robbed of six hundred dollars, he publicly identified one of the assailants as his own son.

A few months before he died, his children summoned him into court again for a trial by jury, and it was decided that he was mentally incompetent to manage his own affairs. The judge appointed a conservator for him, which threw Oliver into a black fury. He was one-hundred and twelve years old, but he was still quite active physically, and able to travel alone wherever he wished; and so he appealed his case, swearing to fight it to the limit. He was in Chenoa as the result of this, when he was taken with a congestive chill, and died "alone and among strangers." So great a bitterness did his children feel for him, that not one of them was present at his death bed; and when his will was read, it was discovered that he had conveyed most of his remaining property to some nieces. His frustrated natural heirs brought suit against Judge Payson, charging that the conveyance of over one thousand acres of land was made without adequate consideration, and, moreover, Franklin Oliver had been incompetent to give such a deed. In spite of all this, Judge Bookwalter, of Danville, who heard the case, decided every point in favor of Payson, leaving the complainants no legal ground for action. Popular opinion, already against Payson and McDowell, felt that these members of the Bar were conspiring together, and that all of them were rascals. The Oliver children appealed, but it was not until two years later that the Supreme Court made Payson disgorge. It ruled that the title to about half of the land, which he had

purchased at a sheriff's sale, was good, but the rest of it, then worth about fifty thousand dollars, had been fraudulently obtained. Payson was ordered to give an accounting of the rents and the proceedings of the sale, but he was to receive credit for any improvements he had made.

In the case of the land Judge McDowell had received, however, there was no lawsuit. It was commonly said that a short time before his death Old Man Oliver paid him a visit, and had frightened him so effectively that he was only too glad to return his share of the loot, which was the land willed to the nieces. Interest in the trial was widespread. Oliver himself was anything but popular, but there was so much sympathy for Mrs. Oliver and her children that it ruined the reputations of both Payson and McDowell. Public opinion against them was so strong that both of them were forced to leave the country. Both of them moved to Washington, D.C., where they made their homes thereafter.

For the man who had been a first settler, a founder of Avoca and of the Pioneer Methodist Church, a pillar of the Fairbury Methodists, the first lawyer and Justice of the Peace, a Judge of the County Court, an organizer and the first president of the Old Settlers' Association, a man of considerable wealth and great dignity, the Blade had not one word of farewell.

Kickapoo Indians

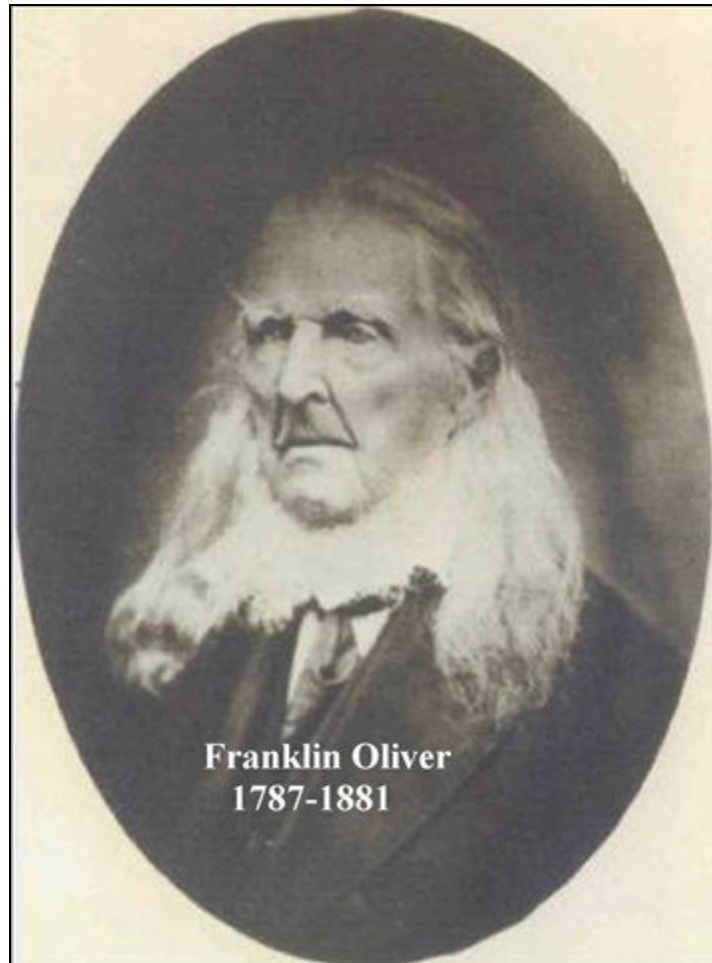
The Kickapoo lived south of Fairbury for a couple of years before moving to Oliver's Grove in Chatsworth. The Illinois State Museum in Springfield has four life-size dioramas depicting typical Kickapoo life. For example, their homes at Oliver's Grove probably looked like the diorama below.



For more information about the Kickapoo tribe that lived south of Fairbury, see the author's book titled *Fairbury, Illinois, from Prehistoric to Modern Times*.

Image of Franklin Oliver (1787-1881)

An image of this colorful man was found from Ancestry.com and is shown below.



Judge Payson Biography

There is no mention of Lewis E. Payson (1840-1909) in the 1878 history book. There is a biography in the 1888 history book.

HON. LEWIS E. PAYSON. It has been truly said that the history of a country is contained in the lives of its citizens. Most emphatically can this saying be applied to Livingston County, and her distinguished citizen, Hon. L. E. Payson, of Pontiac, now Member of Congress for the Ninth District of Illinois.

Judge Payson is a native of Rhode Island, and was born in Providence, Sept. 17, 1841, and is the eldest child of Hanson and Maria (Briggs) Payson, natives of the same State. All the children of Hanson and Maria Payson, five in number, are now living but one. Those living besides our subject are: Hanson L., now living in Milwaukee, and engaged in the mercantile business; Charles, a prominent attorney of Iroquois County, and Alma, now Mrs. S. Simmons, also of Iroquois County. The paternal grandfather of Hanson Payson was a native of Massachusetts, where he engaged in the manufacture of paper, and was a much respected citizen. The father of the subject of our biography was a contractor and builder. In 1852 he moved with his family to Illinois, settling in Henry County, where he engaged in farming. He has now retired from active labor, and is living in Iroquois County.

Young Payson attended the schools of Providence up to the time his parents emigrated to the West, From this time until he was nineteen years of age he assisted his father in farm work. He was then placed at Lombard

University, Knox County, Ill., to complete his school education. Subsequent to his college life he had the degree of LLD conferred upon him. After leaving the university he repaired to Ottawa, Ill., and entered as a student in the law office of Bushnell, Avery & Gray, studying there until September, 1862, when he was admitted to the bar. He remained with the above-named firm until 1865, when he came to Pontiac and opened a law office. He was quite successful in his law practice, and soon took front rank with the members of his profession. He was elected to the office of City Attorney in 1867, which position he held for three consecutive years. At the end of that time he was elected to the office of County Judge and served four years. In 1880 Judge Payson was elected to his first term in Congress, as a Republican Representative from the Ninth District, to which place he has been continuously re-elected. Prior to this time he was on the Board of Education for several years; was local attorney for the Chicago & Alton Railroad Co. for fifteen years, and for the Illinois Central for ten years. He not only distinguished himself as an able lawyer and advocate, but was successful financially, accumulating a large property.

In 1876 the Judge completed his present beautiful residence, which contains all the modern conveniences and luxuries. The grounds, which are extensive, are elegantly laid out and adorned with choice flowers and shrubs and tall shade trees. There is a gradual slope from the dwelling backward, terminating at the waters of the Vermilion, which gracefully winds around, shaded by trees. whose branches extend over its banks.

From the time of Mr. Payson's first entrance into Congress he has been active, laborious and watchful, ever looking to the good of the country and his constituents. This course has placed him among the foremost legislators of Congress, and given him an influential position. During his long term there he has been on many important committees, among which were the Judiciary, Public and Private Lands, and Coinage. He was appointed by President Arthur on the Assay Commission, serving two years. Here, as at all times, looking to the general welfare of the people, he was opposed to the suspension of the silver coinage. Among the more important bills introduced by Judge Payson, and bills championed by him, were those having for their object the reclaiming to the public domain what is known as lapsed land grants, which were conditionally granted to railroad corporations, and the Alien Land Bill. By his able efforts, and those of his co-workers, the prodigal land policy pursued by former legislators has been set aside or annulled, disappointing the voracious appetites of land-shark railroad corporations, thereby saving millions of acres of land to the Government. Some fourteen bills were passed and became laws for reclaiming to the Government lands which had been granted to railroad corporations, and which had been forfeited by them for non-compliance with the conditions of said grants.

Judge Payson took the ground that the railroad corporations not having carried out the provisions of the laws granting these lands. Congress had the power to restore them to the public domain; that the grant was not a mere present but was a premium, offered to secure certain work done of public importance. Others

held that Congress had not the power to restore these lands. These measures were passed in the Forty-eighth Congress. From the Texas Pacific there were restored to the Government between 18,000,000 and 19,000,000 acres; from the Atlantic & Pacific about 23,000,000. There were other minor bills passed restoring about 12,000,000. These lands were mostly in California, New Mexico and the Indian Territory. The result of the revocation of the indemnity land reservation was the restoration to the Government for settlement of some 30,000,000 acres. In this, Judge Payson was the pioneer. By his own special efforts about 55,000,000 acres of granted lands have been restored to the control of the Government.

Another bill in which the subject of this sketch was the principal mover was one providing for the unlawful enclosure of the public domain, the Alien Land Bill, which he introduced, and had passed by the last Congress, providing that no foreigner shall acquire or hold any real estate wherein the United States has jurisdiction. The passage of this bill will be of great benefit to the people of the United States.

Judge Payson is also preparing a bill which he proposes to introduce to the next Congress, regulating emigration to the United States. This bill provides that no foreigner, unless coming on a pleasure tour, shall be permitted to land here, without producing a certificate from the United States Consul stationed at the port, or in the country from which he comes, stating that he was a law-abiding citizen, and had been self-sustaining up to the time of his departure. This will be one of the most if not the most important bill that he has been presented to Congress for

many years, and should be supported by all who have the true interests of America at heart. Should the Judge secure the passage of this bill he will add greatly to his well-earned fame as a legislator, statesman and patriot.

In the Senatorial election for a successor to the lamented Logan, Judge Payson secured nineteen votes, and was next to the successful candidate, Hon. C. B. Farwell. On none could the mantle of this distinguished soldier and statesman have better fallen than on the subject of this biography, and really he is the man for the public to look to, to take the place of this departed statesman.

The Judge has been frequently and favorably mentioned as the Republican candidate for Governor of Illinois, but he would much prefer to remain in Congress and finish the legislation he has in view. Unquestionably he can hold his place in Congress as long as he desires. He enjoys the confidence and the affection of his constituency, and this may be applied, not only to the Republican, but the Democratic party. He is supported by the people of the district, irrespective of party, and he has so ably and faithfully represented their interests that they want no other.

Judge Payson is now in the prime of manhood, and it might be said is now especially fitted by study and long experience for a career of great usefulness to the nation. The time in which he is not engaged in public affairs he spends chiefly with his family at his beautiful home, which is surrounded with elegance and culture. Like most prominent and intellected men the Judge has the faculty of remembering in a remarkable degree,

the features and names of persons when he meets. He rarely forgets a name or face. There is hardly a man in his district whose name he cannot give the instant of greeting.

Judge Payson has a splendid physique, standing five feet ten and one-half inches. His chest is deep, and shoulders broad, carrying a large and well balanced head. His features are full and open, with an ample forehead, beneath which are light blue, or gray eyes, glowing with honest brightness. His complexion is somewhat florid, with hair cast in blonde, now slightly sprinkled with gray. His voice is clear and rich in private conversation, in which he excels, and magnetic and commanding in the forum or on the stump. As an orator he has but few equals in the country. Added to this a dignified bearing, a polished and cordial manner, and a pretty fair pen portrait may he had of the popular and distinguished Representative of the Ninth Congressional District of Illinois.

1909 History Book

There is no mention of Judge Payson in the 1909 history book. This may be because he died in 1909.

Judge Payson Buys 700 Acres at Low Price

The December 7, 1878, edition of the Weekly Standard published the article below about Judge Payson's land purchase.

—Judge Payson, of Pontiac, has purchased 700 acres of the Oliver Estate, near Chatsworth, paying a very low price for it. It is a very fine piece of land.

Franklin Oliver to Marry 30 Year Old Saybrook Woman

The February 2, 1881 *Pantagraph* published this story about Oliver's upcoming wedding.

Which the Same of a Patriarchal Pioneer Has
Been Successfully Fixed on a Gay Widder

Franklin Oliver, Esq., of Oliver's Grove, Livingston county, is as gay an old buck as ever gamboled on the green. He is a white-haired old patriarch of nearly a century's age, and yet the fire of his youth has not departed, and his natural force hath not abated—in his mind. He is soon to wed Mrs. Phoebe Michaels, of Saybrook, a luscious widow of about thirty fleeting summers, whose experience in matrimonial felicity has been somewhat varied but so satisfactory, on the whole, that she is willing to wed a candidate for a not far distant interment. Old man Oliver is one of the earliest settlers of Central Illinois, and owns vast tracts of land around Fairbury, so that his prospective wife will have a tolerably fat thing in a few years, unless she is prematurely snatched from domestic bliss. The patriarchal Oliver is a most eccentric and unaccountable mortal, and has been united in matrimonial bonds on several previous occasions. He has a temper of his own, and proposes to run the machine while he is permitted to paddle round on the footstool. The *Pantagraph* wishes the ardent groom and his bride, that is to be, a happy honeymoon and all the joy that they can extract from matrimony.

Marriage to Saybrook Woman Called Off

On June 20, 1881, the Chicago Inter-Ocean newspaper ran the story below.

June 20, 1881

The Chicago Inter-Ocean Newspaper

A CURIOUS CASE.

**At the Age of Ninety-five an Illinois Man Is
Bound to Get Married,**

**And Squanders His Fortune Upon the Fair
Ones Who Give Him Encouragement,**

**Remarkable Peculiarities and Incidents of
His Life—An Unprecedented Case**

Special Correspondence of The Inter Ocean.

Pontiac, Ill., May 19.—A large portion of the time of the County Court during the week past has been taken up in hearing the evidence and argument in the case of Franklin Oliver, alleged to be insane. The case is such an interesting one, and so novel that the full facts ought to go on record. About the year 1833 Franklin Oliver, then a resident of Washington, D. C, where for a long time he had been a politician of some note, having considerable means, looked South and West to buy a large body of land, having in his enlarged notions some idea of making it a feudal estate or dukedom.

Between Florida and Illinois, after some hesitation, he chose the latter, and as the Kickapoo Indians retired from Kickapoo Grove, near the extreme southeastern part of what is now Livingston County, at that time not organized, he purchased what since then has been known far and wide as "Oliver's Grove," containing 900 acres of beautiful native timber. Around this grove he secured, by entry or otherwise, about 2,400 acres more, and made that his home, and for all one could see, his life also. He would never allow a tree to be cut. He would have no cultivation of the land: no "improvements," so called, were erected on the Oliver domain.

A SMALL CABIN

part log and Part board, was erected, with it doorway so small that the old man stooped to enter it. For long years it was a place for travelers to stop, and many are the stories told of old man Oliver, who is now in his 95th year, still dashing around here and there making love to any woman who will listen to the outpourings of his love-torn heart.

He was always an infidel of the most pronounced type, and delighted in expressing his views even more than Ingersoll does. At one time two Methodist ministers stopped over night with him, and in those days no minister traveling in Illinois ever expected to pay for a night's lodging. This *lex loci* the old man would not tolerate, and told them in the absence of money they must stand out before his house and preach with all their might to pay his hotel charges. The preaching went on, while he stood in front as the congregation.

SWEARING LIKE A TROOPER

wherein the amen's and responses would naturally come in.

He intended to buy a large tract of land, which was afterward given by the Douglas bill to the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and he never forgave Douglas for giving force to the Central Railroad cause. Mr. Oliver was a red-hot Democrat, but the curses which he poured out on Stephen A. Douglas were fearful to hear. His intention was to have made a great estate, but the failure to get that which was held at only illegible centers per acre changed his entire course.

He was for many years the agent of Bonaparte on his great New Jersey estate, laying out his grounds and making roads, bridges, and improvements, but he would never allow a road or a bridge on his land here.

About five years ago he seems to have changed his course and commenced disposing of his vast land in different ways. During all this time he has continued his "distraction" of making love to every woman who would listen to him. He became alienated from his family, and his children claim that a great deal of his property has been lost: that he is not any longer able to attend to his business: that he is selling his land for a song, and is trying to

TRADE OFF THE BALANCE FOR A WIFE

One son has obtained a judgment of \$7,000 against him, another has gone and has not been heard from, but two who are still interested the property are living here, and another in Texas.

His son, Franklin C. Oliver, finding that the property was fast passing out of the possession of his father, united with Edward, another son, to file a complaint in the County Court, and asked that the court would inquire, under section 1 of chapter 86, Revised Statutes, whether his father was "distracted" in the sense of the act (there was no claim that the old man was insane), praying that a conservator might be appointed to take care of the estate. This, while not an entirely unprecedented case, is an uncommon one, the charge being, and the one which the complainant attempted to show, that the old man was affected by what is termed in medical jurisprudence erotomania.

The complainants, through the Hon. C. C. Straw, their attorney, in bringing this suit did it only after a large portion of his property had been wasted, nearly all of which lost by reason of his mania for women. That a man of 94 should be so devoted to the sex as to waste all that for nearly 50 years he had held intact is to say the least most singular, and in this fact, as set up in the claim of his sons and proved in the evidence, rests the peculiarity of the case.

It was shown that from 1833 until 1875 he never had even entertained the question of alienating encumbering, or cultivating this land; that he would not permit men to graze the land with the herds which surrounded him, and that he had repeatedly said that he would have it as near in a state of nature as he found it. He has been three times married, and

HIS LAST WIFE WAS DIVORCED FROM HIM.

The case was heard before Judge Wallace, and a jury, opening Tuesday and lasting until Friday morning, when the jury returned a verdict for the complainant, holding that he was so far distracted that he was not a fit person to manage his property, thus authorizing the court, to appoint a conservator. The defendant declared his purpose of taking an appeal.

Some of the singular points made by the complainants were: That upon one occasion, when he had an important suit in the Circuit Court of McLain County, wherein his son Revilo Oliver was claim to some \$7,000, that he started to go to Bloomington to attend this suit, having taken the cars at Chatsworth for that purpose, and there met a woman, whom he accompanied to Saybrook, and remained at the family residence of his fair Dulcena for some days, pressing his suit with such vigor, for her hand in marriage, that she finally consented, and would have married him had she not discovered that the very land he was promising to convey to her in ante-nuptial agreement had already been clouded as to its title by

SOME OF HIS FOOLISH DEALINGS

Evidence showed that no matter how important the business upon which he was engaged, or however much the conversation might be to his interest, as soon as woman was mentioned the old man would give business no further notice in the fair face of the more engrossing attraction.

At one time about three years ago he took a great fancy to Stella Howard, a fair and somewhat frail sister, then living at Pontiac, and

entered into an agreement to marry her—he was then only 92 years old—and to make over to her one thousand acres of land and settle on her enough besides for her living in style in Washington City. He went to the stores and verbally gave her unlimited credit, and agreed to settle her board bill for some months. The marriage for some reason did not take place, but a judgment against him followed this enterprise of \$200, and a quarter section of land was sold to satisfy it.

He says now that the court may appoint a conservator at any time if he will appoint some fair and buxom widow, but if the widow is not appointed, will appeal and keep on fighting this thing till there is an icy sheet in that void place which the new revision is popularly supposed to have verbally abolished.

1892 Lawsuit Filed Against Judge Payson

The April 9, 1892, edition of the InterOcean newspaper published the following article.

WANT THE LAND BACK

Ex-Congressman Payson Accused of Taking Advantage of an Aged Man

Bloomington, Ill., April 8. —Special Telegram. —Frances Ross and Caroline Dorr, daughters of the late Franklin Oliver, an eccentric and wealthy pioneer of Livingston County, today brought suit against Lewis E. Payson, of Pontiac, ex-Congressman, for the recovery of 1,200 acres of land at Oliver's Grove, near Chatsworth. Oliver died in 1881, aged 94. He had been the owner of thousands of acres of valuable land, but during the last few years of his life had lost all his property.

The complainant alleges that Payson got into his possession 1,200 acres of the land for the paltry sum of \$4,400, the land being actually worth \$60,000 or more; that Oliver, during the last years of his life, was in feeble mind and was unable to care for his property.

Judge Payson Wins First Suit

The March 3, 1894, Pantagraph published the following story.

PAYSON-OLIVER CASE

Mr. Payson, the Defendant, Wins the Famous Land Case

Fairbury, March 2.—[Special.]—The Payson-Oliver case, which has attracted some attention, is settled in favor of the defendant, Hon. L. E. Payson, Judge Bookwalter, of Danville, presided and listened to the vast amount of evidence that was brought in on both sides. The suit was brought in this, the Livingston county circuit court, by the heirs of Franklin Oliver, among the first settlers of this county, they claiming that their father at the time when he transferred the 1,400 acres to Mr. Payson was weak-minded and was not responsible for his doings. The land is very valuable now and the heirs will carry the case to the higher courts. Mr. Payson's friends, on the other side, claim that the cry of fraud on the part of Payson in securing this land was for political purposes at the time he made his last race for congress in this, the old Ninth district, as the records showed that he purchased certificates at sheriff's sale from the following attorneys, who obtained judgments against Franklin Oliver; W.H. Cushman, of Ottawa, Ill.; C. C. Strawn, William T. Ament and A.E. Harding, of Pontiac, and R.E. Williams, of Bloomington. Mr.

Payson secured these certificates from those parties and bought the widow's dower from Mrs. Franklin Oliver.

1896 Illinois Supreme Court Case

Judge Payson lost this lawsuit in the Illinois Supreme Court Case Ross V. Payson 160 Ill. 349, <https://tinyurl.com/y79fecvj>.

The Supreme Court cited several reasons why they agreed with Franklin Oliver's children, that Judge Payson took advantage of Oliver's feeble condition. Excerpts from this case are shown below.

..... The consideration paid for these lands was so grossly inadequate that the court will presume the deeds thereto were obtained by fraud.

..... Whenever there is a great mental weakness in a person executing a conveyance of land, arising from age, sickness or any other cause, though not amounting to an absolute disqualification, and the consideration given for the property is grossly inadequate, a court of equity will set the conveyance aside.

..... The purchase by defendant Payson, while he was acting as Franklin Oliver's attorney, of certificates of purchase on sheriff's sales on execution against Oliver, was fraudulent.

Accuracy of Alma Lewis James' Allegations about Judge Woodford G. McDowell and Franklin Oliver

Alma Lewis James was born in 1899 and died in 1979. She is to be complimented for writing her book *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* in 1967, before the age of computers.

On the negative side of her book, she intentionally only focused on the period 1857 to 1900. She thought that life changed too much after 1900, and therefore she stopped at 1900. She did not write about Fairbury history between 1900 and 1967 when her book was published.

The other negative is her lack of citing specific references and dates associated with her reporting in the book.

Since Alma Lewis James was not born until 1899, she could not have had personal knowledge of the events that occurred before her birth. It is likely she got a lot of information by "word of mouth" passed down to her from her parents, or grandparents.

Alma Lewis James noted in the "*Forward*" section of her book, the tales in the book were not necessarily factual.

Foreword

This is the account of the founding of Fairbury, a little town of Livingston County, Central Illinois.

The tales are not intended as solemn history but for pleasure, and to show that, if parents are people, so are grandparents, and their fathers and mothers before them. They hustled for a living, paid their taxes, worried about their

children, had their fun and their troubles.
They were real.

The story begins with one man's project
for his farm just before the Civil War;
and it ends with the century, when
electricity and the automobile changed
the pattern of family life.

I leave my story there. Anyone desiring
to ascertain what man was candidate for a
political office, or how many tons of coal
were mined during a given year, is
respectfully referred to any of the three
histories of Livingston County.

The three histories she referred to are the 1878, 1888, and
1909 history books.

If one writes a small-town history book, and it includes
"word of mouth" tales versus relying on printed documents,
it is likely to upset some of the local residents who are
mentioned in an unfavorable light in the book. It has been
reported to this author, this was the case when Alma Lewis
James first published *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* in
1967.

When you rely on "word of mouth" tales, the biases of the
people providing the information also come into play.

In any new small town, there is bound to be rivalries
between the prominent families in the town. Alma Lewis
James mentions some of these rivalries in her book. Alma
Lewis James was part of the Beach and Dominy tribes in
Fairbury. The McDowells would have been another
prominent Fairbury family. There was probably friction

between these different families to see who was the most prominent in Fairbury.

No Lawsuits

The author conducted literature searches in an attempt to find any lawsuits filed against Judge Woodford G. McDowell by the heirs of Franklin Oliver. No evidence of any lawsuits could be found.

The Truth

Alma Lewis James alleged the reputations of both Judge Payson and Judge McDowell were so ruined, they both had to leave their respective towns and move to Washington, DC.

It is true both men moved to Washington, DC, and they both died there. Each man could have had legitimate reasons for moving to Washington, DC. In the case of Judge Payson, he served many terms in Congress in Washington, so he may have decided to retire in that city.

In the case of Judge McDowell, his wife had relatives living in the Washington, DC area. There are several Blade stories where Judge McDowell and his wife traveled back and forth from Fairbury to Washington, DC, before they finally moved there.

Based upon published newspaper accounts and legal documents, Judge Payson's reputation probably was damaged. He was sued by the heirs of Franklin Oliver, and the heirs won the suit in the Illinois Supreme Court.

The author assumes that back in the 1890s, lawyers were probably as unpopular with the general public, as they are

today. Fairbury citizens were probably aware that Judge McDowell did legal work for the colorful Franklin Oliver. Once the lawsuit against Judge Payson started receiving publicity, Fairbury citizens may have suspected that Judge McDowell took advantage of Franklin Oliver also.

There was probably friction between the various prominent Fairbury families with competitiveness to be the most important family in the town. Since Alma Lewis James used "word of mouth" stories, it is likely she had some biased reporting in her book.

In reality, we will probably never know if Judge McDowell's reputation was really damaged by the Franklin Oliver scandal or not. There are no published accounts or legal documents that support this allegation by Alma Lewis James in her book *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars*.

CHAPTER 8

Avoca, Illinois

Founding

The 1878 history book describes how the city of Avoca was founded.

The village of Avoca was laid out in 1854, by Judge W. G. McDowell, who owned the land on which it was located. It was surveyed by Amos Edwards, then County Surveyor. The first store in it was opened just before it was laid out as a village, by the McDowells, as noticed in the preceding pages, and for several years it was a flourishing business place. But on the laying out of Fairbury [1857], the sun of Avoca began to decline. Many of the houses were removed to the latter place, and the Judge at last got it vacated and discontinued by a special act of the Legislature.

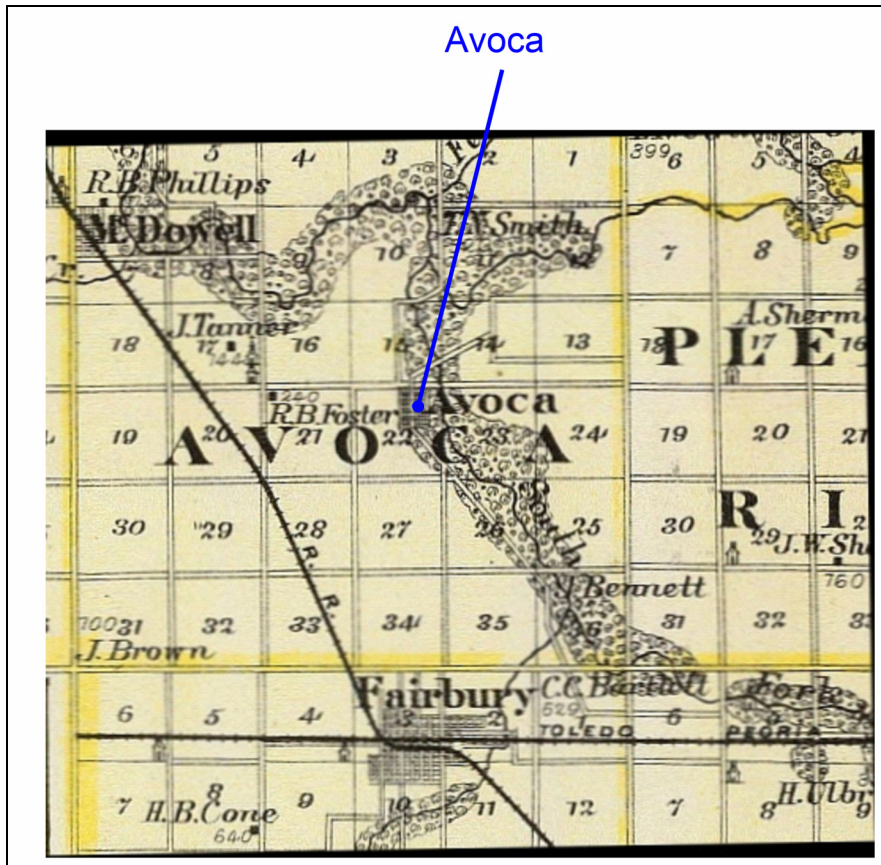
Avoca Cemetery, across the creek from the village, was laid off by the elder McDowell. He and those of his family who have departed this life are buried there. Susan Philips was the first one to occupy the place, and was buried in it in August, 1833.

Moore Cemetery is a private burying ground on the west side of the Grove. Jonathan Moore was the first buried in it, and was interred there in 1839. Nothing now remains to show where once stood a

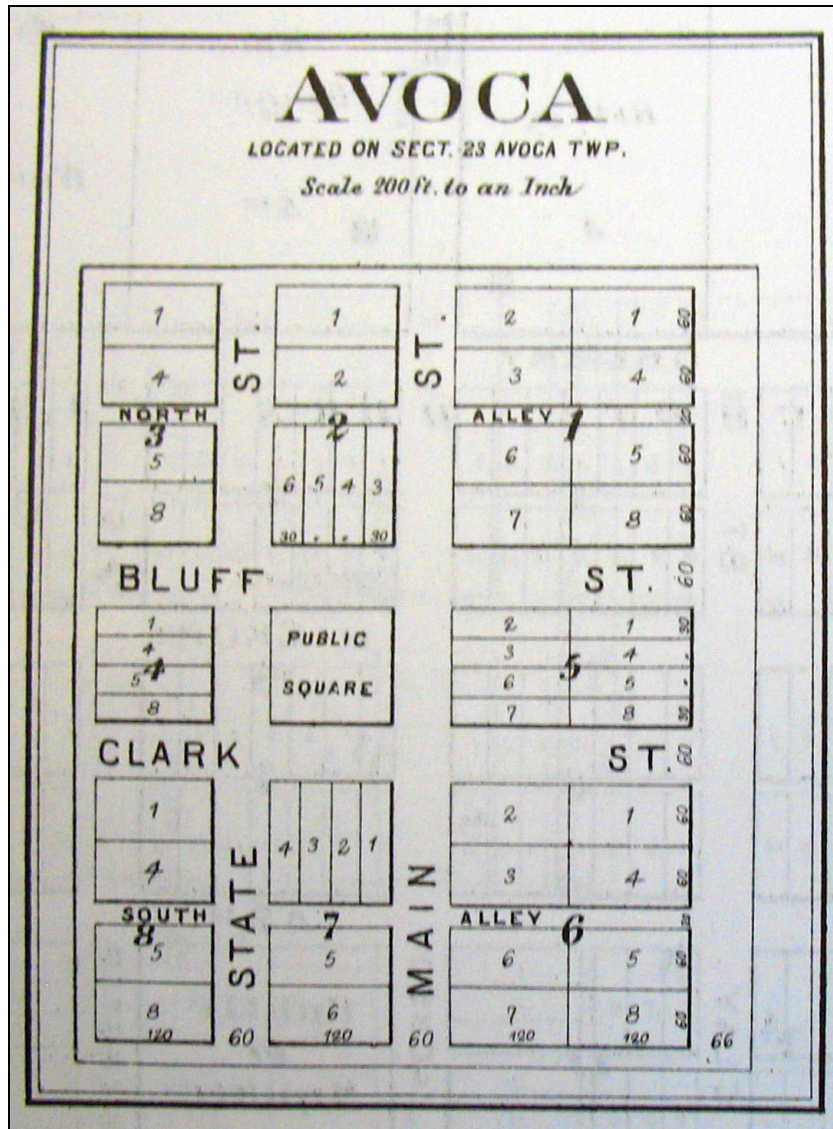
thriving village but the Pioneer Methodist Church, which has already been noticed.

Location

The 1893 Livingston County Atlas includes a map of Avoca Township. This map shows the location of the city of Avoca.

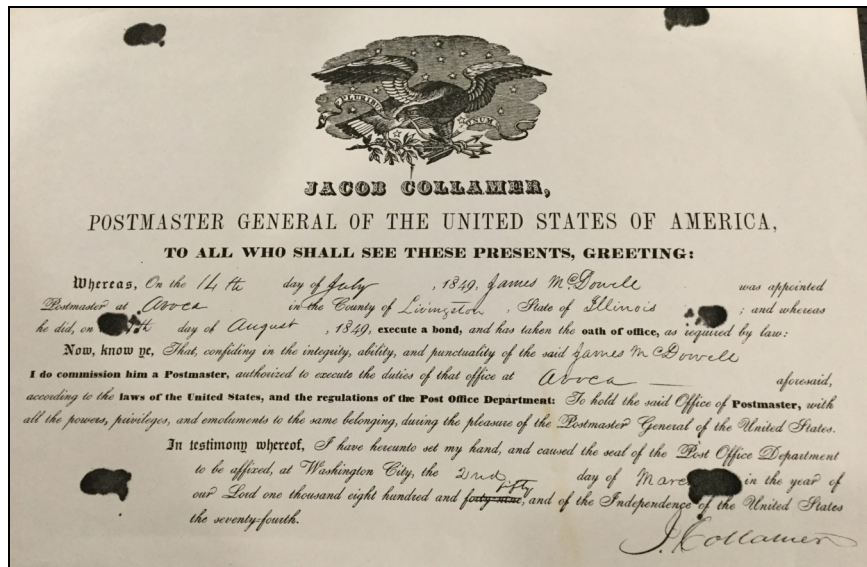


Also in this 1893 Atlas is a city map of Avoca showing the lots and street names.



First Postmaster of Avoca

In 1849, James McDowell was named the first postmaster of Avoca. A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided a copy of the original 1849 document appointing James McDowell as the first postmaster of Avoca. A copy of this document is shown below.



Building the First Avoca Church

The 1878 history book includes a description of the building of the first church at Avoca.

The first church in the township owes its erection principally to her and her family. It was built in 1857, and as it was the first church in this part of the country, it was named by Mrs. McDowell the "Pioneer Methodist Church," a name it bears to this day. The edifice is 32x50 feet, sixteen feet

to the ceiling, a good frame, and cost two thousand dollars. It has quite an interesting history. After it was framed and put up, and two sides "weather-boarded" in, "the winds blew and the floods came and beat upon that house, and it fell." Literally speaking, we presume it was not founded upon a rock, but upon the sand or soil.

Anyway, it was blown down, and not one stone or stick was left upon another. They went to work, however, with renewed vigor. A subscription of several hundred dollars had been made, and after the disaster, Judge McDowell was appointed Superintendent of the work, and directed to push it forward to completion. He had but little of the money that had been subscribed, and but little of his own, as he informed us, yet it so happened that never was there a bill presented to him, for work or material for the church, but he had money enough on hand at the time to pay it. When the building was finished and dedicated, they owed not a dollar, except to him, and to him their indebtedness was \$1,400, on which they agreed to pay him interest until the debt was discharged. The financial crisis of '57 followed, and the amount, principal and interest, finally reached \$1,900. The Trustees concluded they must have a deed for the property, and came to McDowell, who now lived in Fairbury, to know what sum he would take and give them a deed. He told them to go back and collect all the money they could, and then come and see him again. They did so, and finally returned and told

him that \$200 was all they could raise. He took the amount and gave them a deed to the church, leaving the amount of his subscription to the edifice, including interest, about \$1,700. The first preacher in charge of the church after it was completed was Rev. James Watson. It was dedicated by Rev. Z. Hall, of Woodford County, another of the old pioneer Methodist preachers of Central Illinois. The present Pastor of the Church is Rev. Mr. Underhill, and, all things considered, it is in quite a flourishing condition. It being the oldest church in this part of the country, many others have been formed, which drew on its membership, and thus its numbers are not so large as when it was the only house of worship for miles around. This church is the final result of the little mission established at McDowell's in 1833, by Father Royle, as already noticed.

History of the Avoca Churches

It turns out there were several different buildings over the years that the congregation held their services in. Below is a literature review identifying information about the various successive churches.

The August 22, 1891, Blade Story

This issue of the Blade has two stories about the old and new Avoca churches.

—The ladies of the M. E. Church, of Avoca, will give a lawn supper on Wednesday evening, Aug. 26, at the old church. Ice cream, cake, and other refreshments will be served. The proceeds will go to furnish the new church.

Bought a Church

Mr. Dan Street, of Avoca, bought the old Avoca church last Sunday for \$100. He will move it on to the Raridon farm which he also purchased this week, and convert it into a barn.

The December 19, 1891, Blade Story

The December 19, 1891, Blade ran the following story.

Dedicated.

The new Avoca M.E. church was dedicated last Sunday morning, Rev. R. G. Pierce, preaching the sermon. There was a very large attendance despite the heavy roads. The church starts out free from debt, and with fourteen dollars in the treasury, and all this without passing the hat on the day of dedication, a fact which the membership has reason to be proud, and which causes the pastor, Rev. Hobbs to wear a broad smile upon his homely countenance.

The August 26, 1957, Pantagraph Story

The August 26, 1957, Pantagraph ran a special one-page section on the history of Fairbury to celebrate its 100th anniversary. One article on this page had a history of the Avoca church.

August 26, 1957 Pantagraph

Avoca Meeting Results in Jerks

The "Free Thinkers" were not the only ones whose actions lifted the eyebrows of persons outside of Fairbury, however. The Methodists attracted wide attention in 1858 when they got "the jerks" at a revival meeting.

This happened at Avoca, before the Methodists had formed at the new location of Fairbury.

The Rev. John Stubbles was holding a Methodist revival in Avoca Township's first church building. One night, according to the "Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois," the revival goers got "the jerks."

DRAWS CURIOUS

Some danced and threw their arms forward and back with speed. Others worked their arms steadily, like a piece of machinery.

Some moved their heads back and forth quickly. Others shuffled their feet in fast precision. Some jumped up and down for an hour at a time. None showed any sign of exhaustion at these antics.

People came from miles around, filling the little church to standing capacity, to witness this strange phenomena.

Some of the "jerkers" were unable to work for weeks after the revival. Dr. Darius Johnson of Pontiac, who treated some of the patients, diagnosed either chorea or St. Vitus' dance.

The "jerkers" were in possession of their senses, but had no control over the muscular action of their bodies. It was months before most of them recovered.

PREACHING IN 1833

A Methodist minister, the Rev. Jesse Walker, had preached the gospel to Kickapoo Indians near Avoca before any white settlers had come to Livingston County. It was he who organized the county's first Methodist society in Widow McDowell's log cabin in Avoca Township in the fall of 1834.

It was not the first time there'd been preaching in that log cabin, however. The first sermon there had been given by the Rev. James Eckles in the spring of 1833, the same year in which the Rev. William Royal had been given the Illinois Conference's first appointment to the area between McLean County and Chicago, with the Ottawa Mission as headquarters.

In 1850, the Avoca circuit was formed to include preaching places in Livingston County and Mr. Royal was appointed as circuit rider for the circuit every four weeks.

STANDS 40 YEARS

The Avoca church building was made of oak and walnut trees cut from the banks of the Vermilion River and milled in Avoca by James and Woodford McDowell. Mrs. Sarah McDowell, wife of William McDowell, first settlers of Avoca Township, named the church the Pioneer Methodist Episcopal Church. It was dedicated Aug. 2, 1857, by the Rev. Zeddick Hall, then presiding elder of the Methodist Church.

Forty years later, in 1897, the building was torn down and the lumber hauled to Fairbury and used to construct two houses.

Mr. Stubbles, still stationed at Avoca, became pastor of the Fairbury Methodist Church when it was organized in mid-summer of 1838, a few months before a building was erected in the fall of '58. The original 32 by 55 frame structure was enlarged in 1866. Ten years later a basement and one story brick edifice was completed and dedicated, only to be destroyed on July 2, 1877, by a tornado. Another building was erected and dedicated on Jan. 20, 1878, to stand until torn down in 1905 and replaced.

The October 11, 1935, Blade Story

The October 11, 1935, Blade published the following story on tearing down the Avoca church.

October 11, 1935

The Blade

Avoca Church Dismantled; Taken to Lake Bloomington

Was Built Some Forty-two Years Ago— Wood in Building Is Still In Fine Condition

This week was the work of tearing down the Avoca church, five miles north of Fairbury, completed, and this old landmark, which has stood there some 41 or 42 years, is no more.

At a recent meeting of the Illinois Methodist church held in Bloomington, the officers of that body voted to sell the Avoca church building to the East Bay Institute and East Bay Camp located on Lake Bloomington. The work of tearing down the building started the first of last week. This Bloomington organization has purchased several like buildings during the past few years and moved them to Lake Bloomington, where the lumber is made over into other buildings and used by various church denominations. When these buildings are not in use by the churches or their organizations they are rented to other parties.

The wood from the demolished church was in fine condition; in fact, it was in such good shape and so well put together that it was cut into

sections and hauled away on large motor trucks without tearing it apart. The siding and uprights were of white pine, very free from knots and as bright looking as if they had just come from the mills.

C. L. Mowry, of this city, was one of the carpenters who helped build the Avoca church, and in talking to a Blade representative the other day stated the he believed he was the only one living of the carpenters who helped build the church. The other carpenters whom he mentioned as having helped construct the church were the late W. L. Waggoner, G. B. Brownson and James Smail.

When the church was first built its membership was quite large for a country church and quite active. For the past 15 years or more regular services were not held there.

Alma Lewis James 1967 Book

In Alma Lewis James' 1967 book *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars*, she gives her version of some dates associated with the Avoca church.

.....of Avoca, only the church remained, and in 1876, this, too, was torn down. A new one, known as the "Centennial Church," because it was one-hundred years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was built across the river beside the little cemetery. It served the rural community until automobiles and improved roads brought the last of its members to Fairbury. It was dismantled about 1910, and today the only remaining trace of the town of Avoca is the beautiful, serenely quiet cemetery of the church yard, lying beneath its towering trees, on the bank of the Little Vermillion.

Timeline of Avoca Churches

There are several different sources for historical information about the successive churches at Avoca. Some of these sources have conflicting information.

Combining these various sources gives the timeline for successive churches at Avoca.

1857 [Source: 1878 history book]

The first church in the township owes its erection principally to her and her family. It was built in 1857, and as it was the first church in this part off the country. it was named by Mrs. McDowell the "Pioneer Methodist Church," a name it bears to this day. The edifice is 32x50 feet, sixteen feet to the ceiling, a good frame, and cost two thousand dollars.

It has quite an interesting history. After it was framed and put up, and two sides "weather-boarded" in, "the winds blew and the floods came and beat upon that house, and it fell." Literally speaking, we presume it was not founded upon a rock, but upon the sand-or soil.

Any way, it was blown down, and not one stone or stick was left upon another. They went to work, however, with renewed vigor. A subscription of several hundred dollars had been made, and after the disaster, Judge McDowell was appointed Superintendent of the work, and directed to push it forward to completion. He had but little of the money that had been subscribed, and but little of his own, as he informed us, yet it so happened that never was there a bill presented to him, for work or material for the church, but he had money enough on hand at the time to pay it.

When the building was finished and dedicated, they owed not a dollar, except to him, and to him their

indebtedness was \$1,400, on which they agreed to pay him interest until the debt was discharged. The financial crisis of '57 followed, and the amount, principal and interest, finally reached \$1,900. The Trustees concluded they must have a deed for the property, and came to McDowell, who now lived in Fairbury, to know what sum he would take and give them a deed. He told them to go back and collect all the money they could, and then come and see him again.

They did so, and finally returned and told him that \$200 was all they could raise. He took the amount and gave them a deed to the church, leaving the amount of his subscription to the edifice, including interest, about \$1,700. The first preacher in charge of the church after it was completed was Rev. James Watson. It was dedicated by Rev. Z. Hall, of Woodford County, another of the old pioneer Methodist preachers of Central Illinois.

1857 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

The Avoca church building was made of oak and walnut trees cut from the banks of the Vermilion River and milled in Avoca by James and Woodford McDowell. Mrs. Sarah McDowell, wife of William McDowell, first settlers of Avoca Township, named the church the Pioneer Methodist Episcopal Church. It was dedicated Aug. 2, 1857, by the Rev. Zeddick Hall, then presiding elder of the Methodist Church.

1866 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

The original 32 by 55 frame structure was enlarged in 1866.

1876 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

Ten years later a basement and one story brick edifice was completed and dedicated, only to be destroyed on July 2, 1877, by a tornado.

1876 [Source: Alma Lewis James *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* published in 1967]

.....of Avoca, only the church remained, and in 1876, this, too, was torn down. A new one, known as the "Centennial Church," because it was one-hundred years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was built across the river beside the little cemetery. It served the rural community until automobiles and improved roads brought the last of its members to Fairbury. It was dismantled about 1910, and today the only remaining trace of the town of Avoca is the beautiful, serenely quiet cemetery of the church yard, lying beneath its towering trees, on the bank of the Little Vermillion.

Note: Alma's date of 1876 is off by one year, if the Pantagraph July 2, 1877 tornado date is correct.

1877 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

Ten years later a basement and one story brick edifice was completed and dedicated, only to be destroyed on July 2, 1877, by a tornado.

Note: Both the Blade and Pantagraph digitally archived newspapers reported tornados in this area, but do not mention the Avoca Church was destroyed in 1877.

1878 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

Another building was erected and dedicated on Jan. 20, 1878, to stand until torn down in 1905 and replaced.

[Note: This means the 2nd church was built in 1878 and torn down in 1905.]

1891 [Source: Two Blade Articles]

The August 22, 1891, Blade reported the ladies held a fund raiser in the old church, to raise funds to furnish the new church. In the same issue, Dan Street bought the old church and planned to move it and convert it to a barn.

The December 19, 1891, Blade reported the new Avoca church was dedicated.

1905 [Source: August 26, 1957, Pantagraph]

Another building was erected and dedicated on Jan. 20, 1878, to stand until torn down in 1905 and replaced.

1910 [Source: Alma Lewis James *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* published in 1967]

.....of Avoca, only the church remained, and in 1876, this, too, was torn down. A new one, known as the "Centennial Church," because it was one-hundred years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was built across the river beside the little cemetery. It served the rural community until automobiles and improved roads brought the last of its members to Fairbury. It was dismantled about 1910, and today the only remaining trace of the town of Avoca is the beautiful, serenely quiet cemetery of the church yard, lying beneath its towering trees, on the bank of the Little Vermillion.

Note: Alma reported the second church was built in 1876, was torn down in 1910, and there was no third church at Avoca. If the 1957 Pantagraph and 1935 Blade accounts are correct, the third church was built in 1905 and torn down in 1935.

1935 [Source: October 11, 1935, Blade]

Avoca Church Dismantled; Taken to Lake Bloomington

Was Built Some Forty-two Years Ago—Wood in Building Is Still In Fine Condition

This week was the work of tearing down the Avoca church, five miles north of Fairbury, completed, and this old landmark, which has stood there some 41 or 42 years, is no more.

At a recent meeting of the Illinois Methodist church held in Bloomington, the officers of that body voted to sell the Avoca church building to the East Bay Institute and East Bay Camp located on Lake Bloomington. The work of tearing down the building started the first of last week. This Bloomington organization has purchased several like buildings during the past few years and moved them to Lake Bloomington, where the lumber is made over into other buildings and used by various church denominations. When these buildings are not in use by the churches or their organizations they are rented to other parties.

The wood from the demolished church was in fine condition; in fact, it was in such good shape and so well put together that it was cut into sections and hauled away on large motor trucks without tearing it apart. The siding and uprights were of white pine, very free from knots and as bright looking as if they had just come from the mills.

C. L. Mowry, of this city, was one of the carpenters who helped build the Avoca church, and in talking to a Blade representative the other day stated the he believed he was the only one living of the carpenters who helped build the church. The other carpenters whom he mentioned as having helped construct the church were the late W. L. Waggoner, G. B. Brownson and James Smail.

When the church was first built its membership was quite large for a country church and quite active. For the past 15 years or more regular services were not held there.

Note: The 1935 Blade story says this third church was built about 42 years before 1935, which would be 1893.

Summary of the Three Churches at Avoca

1857

Church #1 built.

1877

Church #1 destroyed by a tornado.

1878

Church #2 built.

1891

Church #2 was sold to Mr. Dan Street. He moved it to the Raridon farm and planned to convert it to a barn.

Church #3 was built and dedicated in December of 1891.

1935

Church #3 torn down and lumber transported to Lake Bloomington.

Additional Research Needed

The literature review noted above confirmed, with a pretty high degree of confidence, all of the key dates except the build date of 1878 for church number two. No substantiation for this date could be found in the digitally archived Blade or Pantagraph newspapers.

Rare Photos of an Avoca Church

A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided two undated images of the Avoca church and the Avoca cemetery. These two images are shown below. The names of the people in the photograph are unknown.



It is unknown if the two photos above were taken before or after 1891. In 1891, the second church was torn down, and the third church built.

Rare Photos of the Wooden Bridge at Avoca

A living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834) provided two undated images of the wooden bridge that was at Avoca. The originals are tin-type photographs. These two images are shown below.





An iron bridge was built in 1896 to replace the wood bridge.

The Avoca Cemetery in 2018

This photo of the Cemetery was taken looking west towards the South Fork of the Vermilion River.



The early pioneer McDowell's are buried in the southwest corner of this cemetery, next to the creek.

James McDowell (1815-1880) and his wife Frances Wilson (1824-1900) have a large grave stone in this corner of the cemetery.





William McDowell's gravestone is likely the oldest in this cemetery because he died in 1834 [after arriving here in 1832]. His original stone, plus a more modern version, are shown in the photos on the next page.



WM. McDOWELL
9-2-1703 KY. 9-6-1834 IL

MARRIED 1800
SCOTLO CO. OH.



SARAH DEVER
1787 WV. 1830 IL



There is another large red colored grave stone for other members of the McDowell family.



GERTRUDE McDOWELL
HENDERSON

1878 — 1974

J. F. McDOWELL

1886 — 1943

MACCLAREY L. WEEKS

1941 — 1965



J. W. MCDOWELL
BORN DEC. 25, 1849
DIED SEP. 13, 1919
LUELA A. TANNER
WIFE OF J. W. MCDOWELL
BORN NOV. 29, 1857
DIED AUG. 2, 1901
INFANT 1890-1890

MCDOWELL

Joseph Blair McDowell (1825-1916)

Joseph helped to establish the city of Fairbury, Nebraska. He is buried in the Avoca Cemetery.



The Churchill Family Plot

Located next to the pioneer members of the McDowell family, is the Churchill family plot. Lillie McDowell (1866-1938) married Francis L. Churchill (1860-1920).



Francis Churchill was a very prosperous Fairbury businessman. He established a stone quarry north of Fairbury, just south of the Vermilion River on First Street. He also established a large grain elevator close to the intersection of First and Locust [Main] Streets. He built a beautiful home at the corner of 2nd and Maple Streets.



A portrait of Francis Churchill appeared in a special Blade edition published in 1898.



Additional photographs of Frank and Lillie Churchill were provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834).



Francis L. Churchill
(1860-1920)



Lillie E. McDowell
Churchill (1866-1938)

The Churchill's had three sons. Son Fred Weaver Churchill (1896-1924) served in World War I. He was seriously injured when he was gassed by the Germans while serving in France. He survived the war, but died a few years after the war. His health did not recover after being gassed in France. For more information about Fred and his WWI military service, see the author's book titled ***Fairbury, Illinois in the World Wars.***

Son Woodford M. Churchill (1897-1996) lived a normal life. Son James Delos Churchill (1899-1928) was murdered at age 29 by what today we would call an extreme case of "road rage". James was driving a horse drawn heavily loaded wagon of stone from his father's quarry on 1st Street by the Vermilion River. The convention in those days was for automobiles to give large wagons the right-a-

way. A young black man, Harice Leroy Carter, and several ladies returned from fishing in the Vermilion river to Fairbury. There was a heated verbal exchange between Churchill and the people in the automobile, when Churchill was not given the right-a-way. When the automobile reached Fairbury, one of the black female passengers loaned Carter her gun, and encouraged him to return to Churchill's wagon and murder him. Carter followed her instructions, and shot and killed Churchill.

This murder almost generated racial riots in Fairbury. A cross was constructed and burned in a black man's yard who lived south of Fairbury. Many Fairbury men attempted to go to the Pontiac Livingston County Jail and lynch Carter. He was eventually sentenced and sent to Joliet prison. For more details about this murder, see the author's book titled ***History of Murders in Fairbury, Illinois.***

The Churchill's also had two daughters. Mildred Churchill (1899-1982) married Lawrence Donnally. Hannah F. Churchill (1901-1983) married Cecil Fred Ahlstrom (1902-1975).

Total Number of McDowell Burials

Mary Peterson Erickson published two volumes of her book containing the information she gathered from all Livingston County grave stones.

Her records indicate there are 18 different McDowell family members buried in the Avoca Cemetery.

Different data from the Fort in Lexington, Illinois, indicates there are 21 different McDowell family members buried in the Avoca Cemetery.

Moore Family Cemetery Mystery

The 1878 history book mentions a Moore family cemetery in Avoca.

Avoca Cemetery, across the creek from the village, was laid off by the elder McDowell. He and those of his family who have departed this life are buried there. Susan Philips was the first one to occupy the place, and was buried in it in August, 1833.

Moore Cemetery is a private burying ground on the west side of the Grove. Jonathan Moore was the first buried in it, and was interred there in 1839. Nothing now remains to show where once stood a thriving village but the Pioneer Methodist Church, which has already been noticed.

In 2018, the only cemetery in the Avoca area is the main Avoca cemetery. There are no cemeteries on the west side of the South Fork of the Vermilion River. Cemetery

records indicate no Moore family members are buried in the Avoca Cemetery. Jonathan Moore is not buried in Fairbury's Graceland Cemetery either. The current location of the bodies buried in Moore Cemetery is unknown.

1999 War of 1812 Ceremony

William McDowell (1785-1834) was a veteran of the War of 1812, and is buried in Avoca cemetery.

To honor his service to his country in the War of 1812, a group of descendants organized a special ceremony on October 30, 1999.

The October 27, 1999, Blade published the story below about this special event.

Ceremony at Avoca Cemetery to Honor McDowell's gravesite

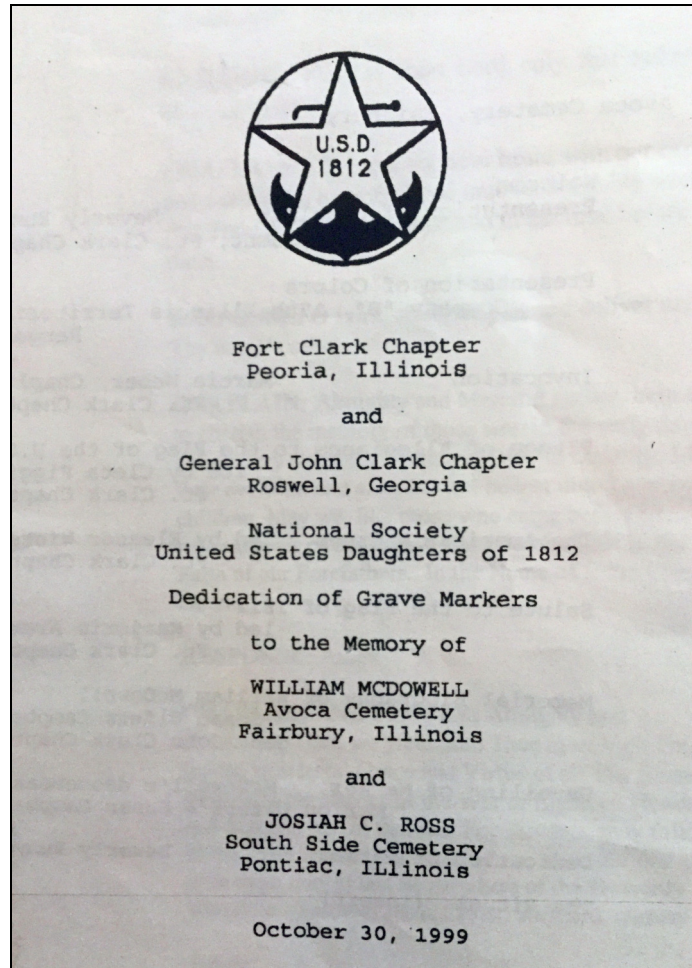
Two soldiers who served in the War of 1812 will be honored on Saturday, Oct. 30. Avoca Cemetery will be the site of the marking of William McDowell's grave by the Illinois Society of the Daughters of 1812 and the John Clark chapter, USD 1812 of Roswell, Ga.

Marion Ramsey Ulfers, formerly of Fairbury, the great-great-granddaughter of William McDowell, will return with her daughter Susan Ulfers Campbell to honor the man this county remembers as the founder of the village of McDowell. [Correction: McDowell was actually founded by William McDowell's son, Woodford G. McDowell] Mother and daughter welcome all descendants of Mr. McDowell to attend the 10:30 a.m. grave-marking ceremony in Avoca Cemetery. The public is also invited to participate.

The color guard for this ceremony will be several members of the Illinois Rangers, an 1812 era re-enactment group with Carroll Lanahan, a relative of Livingston County residents, among its members. This group from the Edwardsville area participates in re-enactments throughout the Midwest. The Illinois

Rangers were first employed by the U.S. military when Illinois was part of the Northwest Territory. Their job was to keep settlers safe from harm.

A copy of the program for this special event is shown below.



A photograph of the re-enactment group was provided by a living descendant of William McDowell (1785-1834).



The same living descendant also provided a photograph showing the William McDowell (1785-1834) descendants who attended this special event at Avoca Cemetery.



To the left of tombstone, among the re-enactors, are: Marion Ramsey Ulfers and Susan Ulfers Campbell. To the right of the tombstone, among the re-enactors, are: Margot Spence Phelps, Jana Grooms and Roberta Sage Grooms.

Marion Ramsey Ulfers and Susan Ulfers Campbell are members of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, General John Clarke Chapter, Roswell, Georgia.

A speech was given at this special ceremony. The text of this speech is shown below.

William McDowell, Pioneer

National Society, Daughters of 1812

Avoca Cemetery, Avoca Township, Livingston Co.,
Illinois Grave-marking and Dedication Ceremony

We are here today to honor William McDowell, an Ohio veteran of the War of 1812, who served from Scioto Co., OH in Capt. John H. Lindsey's Company under Col. John Ferguson's Regiment, Ohio Militia. His Company Pay Roll stated that he was paid \$8 a month and served July, August and September of 1813. His brother, James McDowell, probably also served with him.

Wm. McDowell was born in VA, shortly to become the State of Kentucky, September 25, 1785, probably in Bourbon County, the first son of James and Sarah Gorrell McDowell. (His father served in the Revolutionary War in the 12th VA Regiment, was wounded at the Battle of Brandywine, near Philadelphia and encamped with General Geo. Washington during the winter at Valley Forge, PA.)

By the fall of 1806, our James and Sarah Gorrell McDowell family moved to Scioto Co., OH, twelve miles north of Portsmouth on Long Run. William McDowell, here in the wilderness of southern OH, met and married Sarah Dever, November 28, 1809. They commenced married life by settling on land covered with heavy timber, built a cabin and cleared a farm in the woods of Short Run.

Nine children were born of this union: Mary, John, James, Woodford G., Elizabeth, Hiram, Hannah, Joseph Blair and William T.

On September 27, 1828, the family of William McDowell started from their early home in Scioto Co., OH to seek a home in the then far west. On the night of the third-days journey, the baby, William T. McDowell died; he was buried near Hillsborough, OH on the 4th of October. In November, 1828, they reached their destination on the Little Wea near Lafayette, IN. They settled here for four years, although sparsely settled, where Wm. McDowell with other good neighbors employed teachers and sent the children to school during the winter months. In the spring, summer and fall the boys were kept busy on the farm and the girls spinning, weaving and doing housework. All of this was the common routine of business for the next four years.

On October 16, 1832, William McDowell and family started for their new home on the Vermilion River in Livingston Co., State of Illinois, arriving on November 21, 1832, a 3-1/2 week journey. Previous to this, William McDowell had located a claim on government land, built a cabin and broken-up some of the land. He had taken claims for himself, three sons, John, James and Woodford G., and his son-in-law and daughter, Nicholas and Mary McDowell Hefner, all of which joined and were adjacent to his land. Son, Woodford G. McDowell quotes, "It was my mother and fathers great desire to have a home in the west and their children all settled around or near them." Wm. McDowell continued to improve the farm and to make preparations for purchasing the land when it would be brought unto the market by the government of the United States. But this, he was not permitted to accomplish.

On September 6, 1834, William McDowell died and was called home to his reward in that heavenly country where he had laid up treasures that neither "moth nor rust doth corrupt." (quote by son, Woodford G. McDowell). He was 48 yrs. 11 months of age. He was laid to rest on his government claim which later became the Avoca Cemetery where we stand today.

William's widow, Sarah McDowell was left with seven children to provide for and she started in anew to carry out the original design of her deceased husband, which was, if possible, to keep the family together, give them a common school education and see them settled in homes of their own. As an early settler of Livingston Co., IL, Sarah offered her cabin for church services and a home for all preachers of all denominations, with three other neighbors built a schoolhouse and employed a teacher, she improved her children's lives as best she could. Sarah Dever McDowell lived long enough to fulfill her husband, William McDowell's desire; she died March 20, 1858 and was laid to rest next to her husband in the cemetery at Avoca, Illinois.

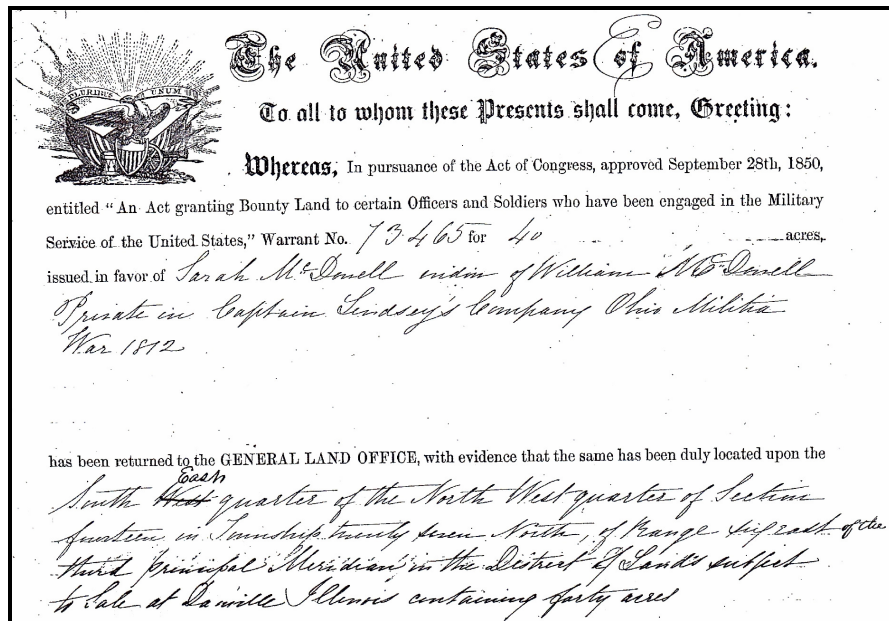
1839 Land Purchases by Sarah McDowell

The Pontiac library has a book titled ***Original Land Grant Book: Livingston County, Illinois***, by Clark Hopkins, 158 pages, Ref: 977.361. In this book are two land purchases by Sarah McDowell.

Sarah McDowell - May 6, 1839, 2 parcels.
Township 27 (Avoca Twp.) Range 6 Livingston Co., IL.
80 acres - Section 14 - \$1.25 per acre.
80 acres - Section 22 - \$1.25 per acre.

1854 Land Warrant

In 1850, Congress passed a law awarding land warrants to veterans of the War of 1812. Since William McDowell had died in 1834, the land warrant was issued in 1854 to his widow, Sarah McDowell. A copy of this original warrant is shown below. It is split into thirds, to fit the format of this book.



according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands returned to the *GENERAL LAND OFFICE* by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

Now Know Ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said

Sarah M. Donnell

the tract of Land above described; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said

Sarah M. Donnell and to her

heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, I,

Franklin Pierce

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made Patent, and the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the

First day of *March*

in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred

and *fifty four* and of the INDEPENDENCE

OF THE UNITED STATES the seventy-*eighth*.

BY THE PRESIDENT:

Franklin Pierce

By *Jno. H. Wheeler* Apt. Sec'y.

Recorder of the General Land Office.

J. N. Geary

CHAPTER 9

McDowell, Illinois

On March 27, 1976, the Pontiac Daily Leader ran a special one-page story on the history of McDowell. Excerpts from this story are shown below.

March 27, 1976
Pontiac Daily Leader

1872 Saw Start of McDowell

The village of McDowell, six miles southeast of Pontiac, lies on the track of the old Chicago & Paducah railroad which ran south from Pontiac. This line later became the Streator branch of the Wabash Railroad and then was taken into the Norfolk and Western system.

The railroad was laid in this area in 1872. The following year, Judge Woodford G. McDowell hired Charles Hewitson to plat the town on land the judge owned there. McDowell had already built a dwelling on the future town site.

A post office had been established in this location in 1872, with John Cottrell as postmaster. Later, a store was built by Ben Walton, who, after a time, moved his business to Fairbury.

By 1878, the village had two stores, one owned by R. B. Phillips and the other by Charles Danforth. There were two blacksmiths, Henshaw and Schide, with wagon shops and a grain dealer, Frank Bregga, but no elevator or grain warehouse. The population was around 150.

Judge McDowell also owned a nearby limestone quarry with a large kiln.

In 1898, the village had added an elevator along the tracks and a coal yard. A Methodist Episcopal Church had been built in the community.

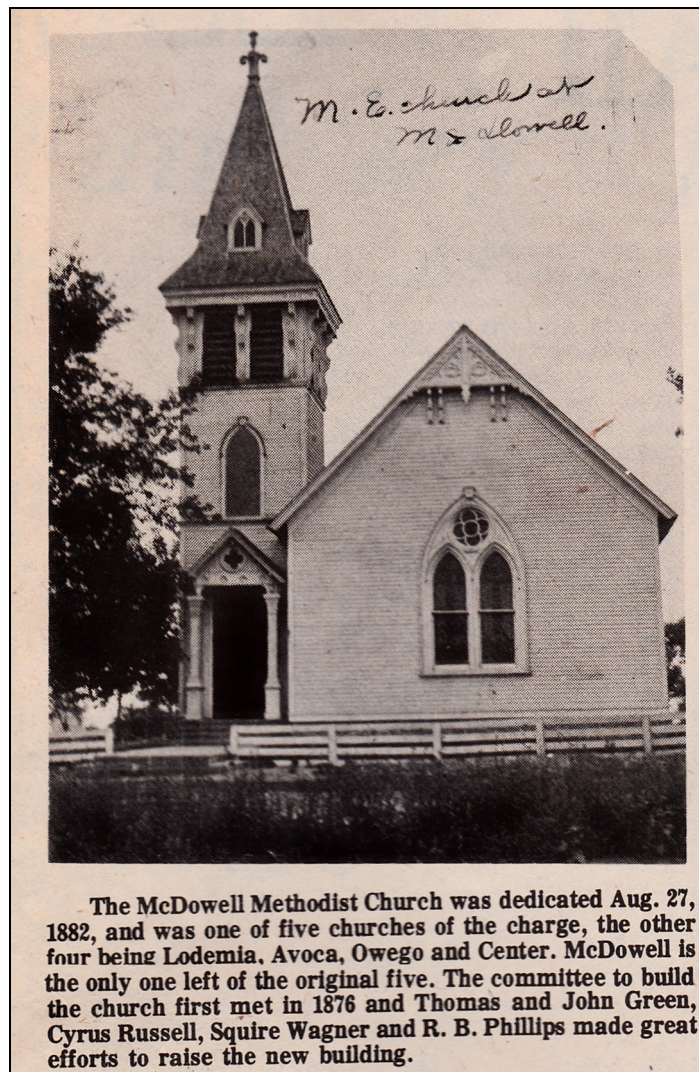
McDowell, who platted and lent his name to the village, was a member of a Livingston County "first family." He had arrived in Avoca Township in the spring of 1832 with his parents, the William McDowells, four brothers and three sisters. Thomas G., a brother of William McDowell, arrived in 1848, and was one of the first area settlers to forsake the timber for the prairie land.

The large family first settled along the banks of the south fork of the Vermilion River near where the village of Avoca was to stand.

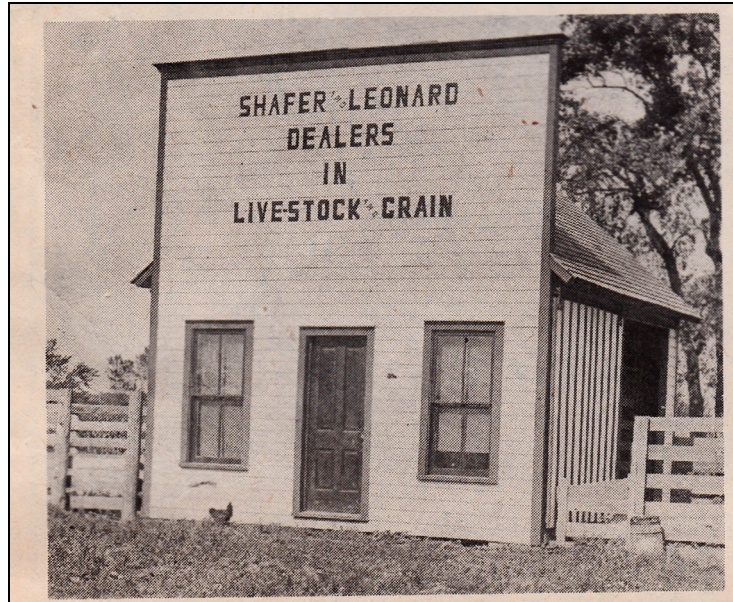
William McDowell died in 1834, soon after his arrival in the county, but Woodford and two of his brother remained to become leading county citizens. Two other brothers moved west.

Judge McDowell was admitted to the bar in 1844 and was the only lawyer in Avoca Township until 1860, when he moved to Fairbury. He was elected county judge in 1859. He was also a dealer in real estate.

The memories and records of Judge McDowell and his brothers were the source for much of the material permanently recorded in the 1878 Le Baron "History of Livingston County, Illinois."



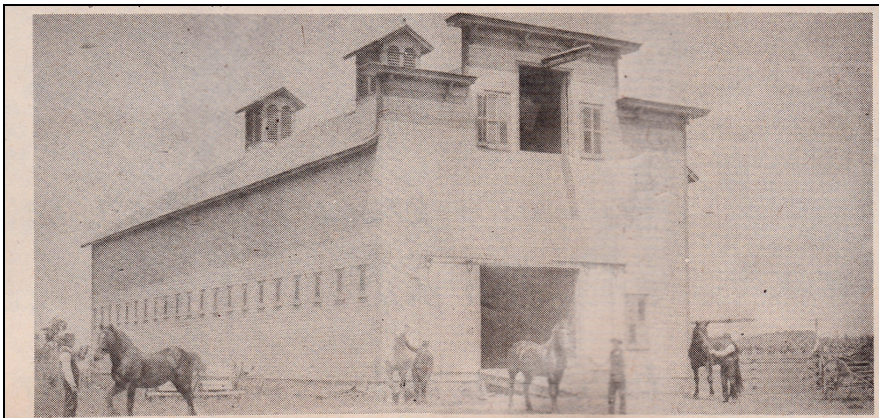
The McDowell Methodist Church was dedicated Aug. 27, 1882, and was one of five churches of the charge, the other four being Lodemia, Avoca, Owego and Center. McDowell is the only one left of the original five. The committee to build the church first met in 1876 and Thomas and John Green, Cyrus Russell, Squire Wagner and R. B. Phillips made great efforts to raise the new building.



Shafer and Leonard, dealers in grain and livestock, operated their business in the village of McDowell.



School pupils of 1911 line up beside the McDowell School. First row, left to right, are Byron Hamilton, David Leonard, Harold Ruff, Everett Tinges, Veta Hamilton, Ruth Tinges, Vernon Tinges and Noral Hamilton. Second row, left to right, are Albert Shafer, Earl Pflager, Lavon Hamilton, Zora Hamilton, Emma Cottrell and Gladys Tinges. Third row, left to right, are Bert Bricker, Wayne Woples, Ralph McCormick, Elmer Crouch, Roy Roof, Florence Shafer, Nellie Ostrander (teacher), Fern Bricker and Ella Bricker.



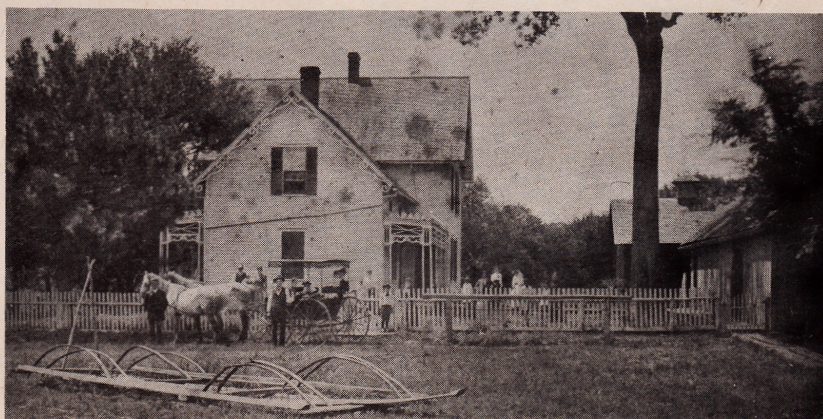
This photo shows the horse barn on the old Morrison homestead east of McDowell. The farm was noted for the importation of fine Belgian draft horse stock.



These well dressed youngsters formed the Sunday school class of the McDowell Methodist Church in 1905. First row, left to right, kneeling and seated, are Harold Ruff, Elmer Crouch, Lavon Hamilton, Zora Hamilton and Vera Ramey. Second row, left to right, are Harold Tucker, Tima Wesley, Elsie Bruer, Myra Green and Ruth Leonard. Third row, left to right, are Ruth Lamb, Nat Leonard and Leo Ramey.



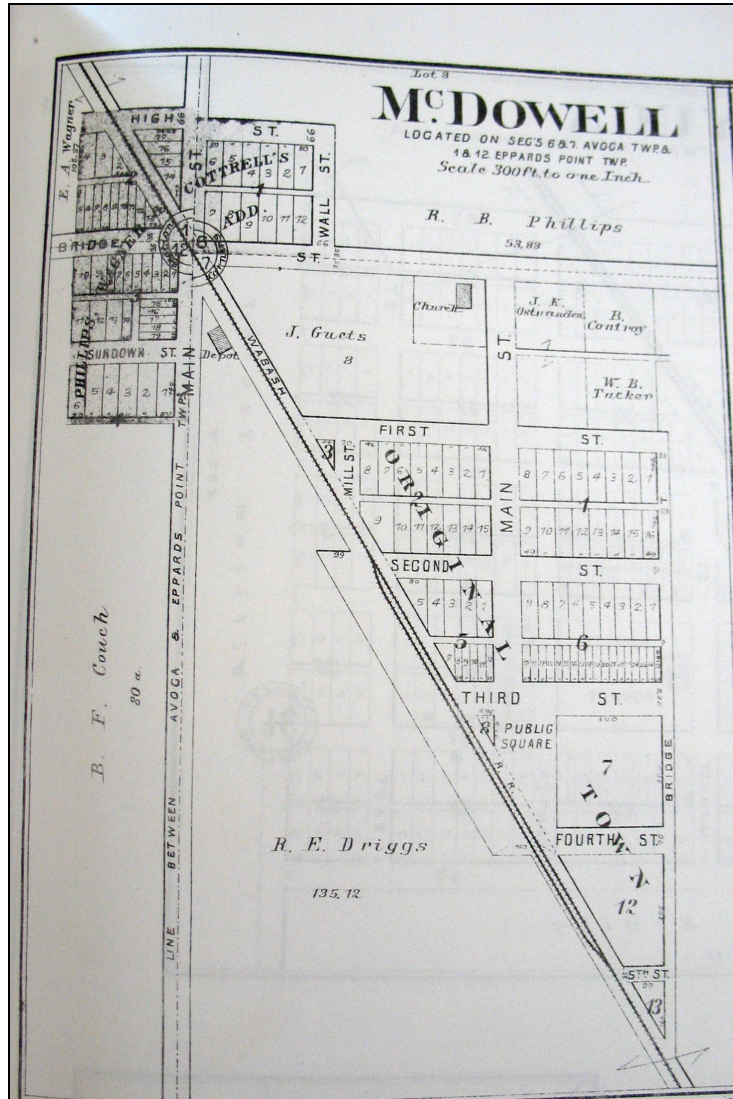
The village of McDowell was platted along the Streator Branch of the Wabash railroad. This photo shows the Wabash station in McDowell. The branch line is now a part of the Norfolk and Western system.



This house is the residence on the old Morrison homestead east of the village of McDowell. The farm was noted for the breeding of fine Belgian horses.

1893 Map of McDowell

The 1893 Atlas has a map showing the street layout for McDowell, Illinois.



McDowell in 2018

The principal structures in McDowell include a large Beck grain bin complex, the grain elevator, and the Methodist Church. The church is well known for its annual pancake & sausage fundraising meal.







McDowell United Methodist Church

69th Annual

"Pancake & Sausage Stuffer"

Thursday, January 12, 2017

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

"All You Can Eat"

12 and over: \$8.00 Donation

Carry-out 50¢ Extra

McDowell United Methodist Church

69th Annual

"Pancake & Sausage Stuffer"

Thursday, January 12, 2017

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

"All You Can Eat"

Ages 5-11: \$4.00 Donation

Carry-out 50¢ Extra

CHAPTER 10

Fairbury Echoes Museum



The 1976 United States Bicentennial prompted the citizens of Fairbury to start considering a way to preserve Fairbury, Illinois history.

Begun in 1977 through the generosity of Floyd and Marion McDowell Stafford, Fairbury Echoes Museum opened to the public June 23, 1979. The museum was organized as a bicentennial project by a committee appointed by the Board of the Dominy Memorial Library and initially operated under the aegis of the Library Board. It was located east of the Library in the former Woodford G. McDowell house. This house was once owned by Phoebe Dominy, grandmother of Marion McDowell Stafford, and was later owned by the family of Judge C.F.H. Carrithers.

Original 1979 Museum Mission Statement

The Museum seeks to preserve historical material from Fairbury and Cropsey, Illinois, and the surrounding areas and to make that material accessible to the public. Through its exhibits it depicts the history and progress of this area in all phases of development. Each exhibit centers on a single theme to which the entire building is devoted. In 1982 the Museum received a certificate of merit in the category of museum techniques awarded by the Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums.

Museum Moves to Locust [Main] Street

The Dominy Library had a need to physically expand their building to the east. This required that the house used for the Fairbury Echoes Museum be demolished.

The decision was made for the Fairbury Echoes Museum to establish themselves as a separate non-profit 501(c)3 organization. In 2003, the museum changed its location in to 126 West Locust Street.

McDowell Connection to the Echoes Museum

The major benefactors who helped establish the Fairbury Echoes Museum back in 1979 were Floyd Stafford (1898-1980) and Marion Stafford (1905-1998). Mrs. Stafford's maiden name was Marion McDowell. She was the daughter of Grant Yates McDowell (1863-1955) and Jennie Curl Dominy (1866-1947).

Mrs. Stafford donated many of her family's historic items to the museum. Among these items are the wedding dress of Jennie Curl Dominy (1866-1947) and other clothing items. She also donated a family photo album, which includes photos of various McDowell family members.

Most of these items are on permanent display at the Fairbury Echoes Museum.

1998 Blade Article Detailing Stafford's Generosity

Fairbury Blade

September 30, 1998

Marion Stafford's Fairbury roots were deep, as was her love of the community

By Jim Roberts

Few people have shown more loyalty and love for Fairbury than Marion McDowell Stafford, who at age 93 was entombed last Tuesday, Sept. 22 1998, in the mausoleum at the city's Graceland cemetery.

Granddaughter of Fairbury's first mayor and daughter of a hard-bitten banker and a generous mother, Marion in the last 30-or-so years had contributed at least \$800,000 to the cultural, social and recreational life of Fairbury where she was born July 27, 1905.

Most recent was \$170,000 which will fund a mile-long trail in Fairbury's new city park development on North First street, located between The Stafford swim pool and field-house, and County road 1200 North. That field house is now home of the Prairie Central Boys and Girls club, and the site of other recreational and fitness events.

Just a couple of weeks prior to her death, Marion was present at ground-breaking ceremonies for the park, which will include soccer and volley-

ball areas, plus the trail, named as a memorial to her and her late husband, Floyd. The winding strip is to be of concrete, eight feet wide, according to City Superintendent LeRoy McPherson. Hopes are to extend it across the city's north side to the Treatment plant on the east side.

But there are at least a half-dozen other gifts to Fairbury, the major one the Floyd and Marion Stafford Swim Pool and Field house, built in 1984-1985, replacing one some 30 years old whose plumbing had worn out.

That pool had been a free-standing, perpetual motion sort of organization with which gravity, so to speak, finally caught up. It was built with funds from a community cash campaign, but had no tax base. The yearly start-up and maintenance problems finally were demanding more muscle and time and money than the good hearts of that civic committee could muster.

Prairie Lands Foundation had been born in Fairbury in the fall of 1980, a few months after John W, "Bud" Gerber Jr, had a meeting, regarding estate planning and gifts, in the spring of that year with the Stafford's at their winter home in California. First fruit of that meeting was a gift in December, 1980, of a \$32,500 annuity to the foundation. In the meantime, Floyd Stafford had died on June 30.

A year later, Prairie Lands executive committee of Gerber, Dean Broquard and Jim Paternoster signed an agreement with Marion regarding the transfer of 177 acres of farmland to the foundation, with the pool to be the beneficiary. The deed was delivered in May, 1982.

During that year, Stoller & Maurer Construction of Fairbury designed the project and ground was broken in the spring of 1983 as the farm land was sold for approximately \$504,000.

That didn't quite cover the costs, but \$40,000 from bequests by Don and Milly Joda, and Grace Masterson, all retired teachers, helped.

Then Marion once more rode to the rescue, with \$10,000 to the foundation in December, 1985, and \$20,500 in October, 1986 to cover the remaining indebtedness for the pool which was then officially turned over to the City of Fairbury. The Stafford gifts thus totaled \$566,000 for the pool.

Earlier there had been \$15,000 from Floyd and Marion in May, 1969, to Indian Creek Country club for the new clubhouse (which was built with mostly volunteer labor) at the same time the golf course was being remodeled and upgraded (also with mostly volunteer labor, machinery, and materials).

And in 1976, they bought the residence just east of Dominy Library (another gift to Fairbury much earlier, mother and two aunts, in memory of their sister, Hazel, 17-years-old at the time of her premature death of a respiratory ailment). The 1976 purchase became the Fairbury Echoes Museum, opening in the spring of 1979.

Since then, Marion also had provided for new lights in the library.

And there have been other, unpublicized, benevolent acts. A number of Fairbury youths

owe their college educations to personal sponsorships by the Stafford's. Probably only they know who they are.

Born Marion McDowell on July 27, 1905 to Grant and Jennie Dominy McDowell, she was actually a fifth generation resident of the community, which is an oddity because the fourth generation of her antecedents never lived here.

Her grandparents were Lorenzo Beach and Phoebe (Curl) Dominy. Besides becoming Fairbury's first mayor, he was a farmer, business-man and banker and very prominent in the city's development. Dominy, a native of Ohio had been orphaned in the nation's first typhoid fever epidemic, 16 months after his birth on Mar. 9, 1844, and his care fell to his maternal grand-parents, Dr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Beach. The doctor had emigrated from his native Vermont to Ohio in 1813, earned a medical certificate and opened a practice in the community of Amity. There, he became the largest livestock breeder and land-owner in area.

Selling out, he brought his wife, grandson and money to the "new frontier", settling in Fairbury and Indian Grove township in 1855. Dominy, the grandson, was a young farmer nine years later when he wed Phoebe Curl; both of them 20 years old. They farmed six more years until he and his uncle, T. A. Beach, opened a hardware business in Fairbury.

Later, the two men helped form the banking house of Bartlett, Beach and Dominy, becoming one of the most influential banks in Central Illinois at that time.

Besides becoming the city's first mayor and serving several terms, Dominy was also Indian Grove township supervisor, the school treasurer and also treasurer of the Fairbury Fair; substantial accomplishments for a man who at 58 years, died in 1902. His wife, Phoebe, lived another 30 years, expiring in 1932.

The Dominy's had five children, four girls and a boy. He, christened Charles, expired at six months of age in 1876, The fifth child, Hazel, mentioned earlier, was the inspiration for the family's gift to Fairbury as the Dominy Library. The first two daughters were twins, Jennie and Jessie, born July 2, 1866, followed by Lizzie (Elizabeth) on April 15, 1866. Oddly enough all three girls married men who like their father, were, or became bankers independent from one another in the same community.

Lorenzo Beach Dominy prospered, whether on his own, or via his grandfather Dr. Lorenzo Beach's money. He built a "prairie mansion" for his family at the southwest corner of Third and Oak Streets, (now U. S. 24). Over the years, this home ultimately became a funeral home until, vacant, it was demolished about 1969 or 70 and became the site of the first of several apartment complexes conceived by the late Bill Weber and today known as the "Weber 12".

[Correction: The Dominy house was at the northeast corner of Third and Oak. The Powell home was at the southwest corner of Third and Oak, and became a funeral home.]

Then, as his daughters became engaged, L. B. built similar homes for them. The first, and the

only one remaining, was across the street from the family home, and is now totally restored and owned by Elizabeth "Betty" Nussbaum, a Fairbury native who after serving in the military during World War II, had a full career in the U.S. State Department serving all over the world, the last two postings being chief of protocol in the embassy at the Vatican and at The Court of St. James in London.

Then came homes for Jennie's twin, Jessie, when she wed banker Herbert Powell, in 1893. The town was aghast when his bank failed in the late 1930s; questions extending even to doubts in his church, where he was treasurer.

And finally, the third mansion, on Oak Street (U.S. 24), just west of the one now occupied by Betty Nussbaum was built for "Lizzie" when she wed William Bane, also a banker, July, 1890. This was razed about 25 years ago to be replaced by the display lot for Paternoster Motors.

It was Jennie, the first of the twins, who became the mother of Marion following her 1890 marriage to Grant McDowell. With the small nearby community of that name, allegedly there were several strains of that family in the area, not all of whom spoke well of each other. Marion had an older brother, James L. (Ren), who suffered from epilepsy and died in the late 1930s, reportedly on the Fairbury Fairgrounds.

G. Y., as he was known, three years prior to his marriage, had built in 1887, at the southwest corner of Third and Locust streets, a handsome building to house the McDowell bank. Also on the ground floor were the post office, at the south end adjoining the railroad tracks and

across the street from the depot; and in the center, opening on Third street, a barber shop.

[Correction: The building was built by I. P. McDowell for his bank. G. Y. McDowell did not start his bank until 1905.]

The Blade occupied the entire second floor.

The bank closed in 1924, the barber was assassinated, the post office moved to Second and Locust, and The Blade moved to the ground floor, with professional offices upstairs. The structure ever since has been known as "The Blade building".

The Bane family had one child, a daughter Hazel Dominy Bane, who married Carl Goudy. He had a motorcycle dealership in Fairbury at the turn of the century when these vehicles were considered stylish and did not have the stigma which now accrues to some of their fanciers. Goudy and his brother became internationally famous as dirt and board track racers and held several world records.

He was also an inventor, earned many patents, and eventually moved to New York State. They had two daughters, Elizabeth Ann and Barbara, the latter still living in the west, and who were both frequent visitors in Fairbury, with their mother, into the 1960s and 70s.

So those are the roots of Marion McDowell Stafford.

She was a generous woman, but she was no pushover.

Her father was stern and drove hard bargains. It was in contrast to his mother and her grandmother Dominy, who after the death of L. B. was a firm supporter for creating the first Fairbury hospital, also gave generously to Methodist Hospital in Peoria, where she was on the board of directors, and also gave to Illinois Wesleyan University.

And while Marion followed her grandmother's civic feelings, she also could be as stern as her father, even with him. When her marriage to Floyd was approaching in 1947, to be held in the home built for her parents and where Ms. Nussbaum now lives, G. Y. reportedly said, "We'll stand right in front of the fireplace; that's where your mother and I stood for our ceremony".

"No," the legend goes, "Floyd and I will stand over here, in the south window of that parlor."

But G. Y. refused, with the final edict, "We'll be by the fireplace."

Well, the ceremony began. and what do you know? There were Marion and Floyd in the south window, and G.Y. had to leave his stance by the fireplace and adjourn to the south window in order to give his daughter away!

That backbone stood her in good stead, for her known wealth drew plenty of people at her door.

But her loyalty was to Fairbury and her great, great grandfather Dr. Lorenzo Beach, and her grandfather. Lorenzo Beach Dominy.

Two centuries ago, physicians undoubtedly did dental work.

Did Dr. Lorenzo Beach's family tree, five generations later in Marion, have a tooth fairy on one branch?

And a very gracious one at that!



CHAPTER 11

Alma Lewis James

Fairbury Historian

Alma Lewis James (1899-1979) was a Fairbury historian. The most prominent of her publications was her book about Fairbury history titled *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars*.

In 1967, Alma Lewis James published the first edition of her book titled *Stuffed Clubs and Antimacassars: Accounts and tales of early Fairbury, Illinois*. She also published a revised edition in 1977. The primary difference between the two editions is related to William T. Stackpole. In the 1967 edition, she dedicates an entire chapter to the life of William T. Stackpole. For unknown reasons, she eliminated the Stackpole chapter in her 1977 edition. From a McDowell history perspective, there is little difference between the two editions.

Copies of her second edition are still available from the Echoes Museum in Fairbury, Illinois. Her book includes many references to the McDowell family between their arrival in 1832 until about 1900.

Nicks from the Blade

Alma Lewis James also went through old copies of the Fairbury Blade newspaper and clipped little snippets of Fairbury history. These snippets were later typed and called *Nicks from the Blade*. These Nicks include many references to the McDowell family.

In the Nicks from the Blade computer files, there are two distinctive types of files. Some of them were taken from the Blade and the computer directories are dated.

The other type of files were not taken from the Blade. The computer directories are not dated. They are simply stories told to Alma by her parents or other people. Many of these stories about the McDowell's are unsubstantiated and contain many personal biases.

For this book, the files that came directly from the Blade will be used. Some of the unsubstantiated stories will also be used in this book. Any unsubstantiated negative allegations about the McDowell's will not be used in this book.

Unusual Advertising Dresses

In her 1967 edition of *Stuffed Clubs & Antimaccassars*, she described an unusual method for Fairbury businessmen to advertise their businesses.

For such business as these advertisements brought in, the stores were open from six in the morning until ten at night, and banking hours were from 8 to 4 o'clock, six days a week. The stores were closed only on Sundays, Fourth of July, and Christmas Day. When they began to shut their doors over the noon hour on Thanksgiving, it was considered an outrageous innovation.

Gradually, as the tensions of the old East-West feud continued to fade, there developed a growing willingness to cooperate with each other to draw trade into town.

At Christmas time they jointly held shooting matches for turkeys or a team of work horses. To entice the ladies, they got together and presented a Carnival at the Opera House. Each firm chose a young lady to represent it, and these appeared, one by one, on a platform for the edification of the audience. Several were notable.

For Straight's Milling Company, Fribbie Filley's hat was prettily decorated with ears of corn, grain and fancy grass. Jessie Dominy, representing Bartlett, Beach and Dominy, the bankers, was attired in black silk and lace, lavishly ornamented with paper money and imitation gold coins. Nettie Lough, for the Blade, wore pink. The side panels of her dress were made of Blade copies, and the front of it

was decorated with specimens of lob printing, while her boa and hat trimmings were of fringed paper.

It was Lutie McDowell, Isaac's daughter, however, who was distinctively unique. In behalf of Dr. Rayburn, the local dentist, her hair ornament was the head of a tooth with a gold crown. Her dress decorations were professional instruments, tooth brushes and dental plates, and she wore a necklace and bracelets of artificial teeth.

The Carnival was pronounced a great success.

The author found an old photograph of Lutie McDowell's unique dress in Marion Stafford's family photo album at the Echoes Museum. The back of the photograph says "Lu McDowell, Carnival, March 7, 1890".



Ornery McDowell Boys

In her *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* book, Alma Lewis James identified the three sons of I.P. McDowell (1824-1901) as the ornier boys in Fairbury.

1. Thomas Scott O'Neil (TSO) McDowell (1858-1911)
Commonly called "Tommy" when a boy.
2. Elmer E. McDowell (1862-1918)
3. John Van McDowell (1864-1917)

Treatment of Pontiac Boys

Alma Lewis James reported that Fairbury boys did not like the Pontiac boys coming to Fairbury and trying to steal away their girl friends!

Her parents, mindful of their duty to get her married, saw to it that she had privacy, but equally careful of her reputation, they let the young man know they were always close by, as a general damper on any ideas that he might get.

Since there were no mechanical aids, such as radios or television, for the entertainment of callers, it largely depended upon the young lady herself to improvise the fun for the evening.

Therefore, every girl was compelled by her mother to learn to play the organ or piano, no matter how repugnant it was, both to herself and others; and it added greatly to her popularity if she also was able to perform upon a mandolin or a guitar, for all the boys sang, unless they positively had no voice.

The ordinary date was for a Sunday afternoon walk, or a buggy ride. The latter was at the cost of a degree of preparation, because the horse had to be curried, the buggy washed, and the harness cleaned. Consequently just sitting at the girl's home was very popular with the boys.

Nevertheless, even a simple call was filled with danger for any out-of-town man, because of the McDowell boys and their friends, who managed to eliminate practically all outside competition. They were particularly hard on the Pontiac boys, who, unlike themselves, had the reputation of being quite fancy dressers, because they wore light plug hats and stylish suits when they came to Fairbury.

The first time the stranger appeared, he was let off with a warning, since it was considered that ignorance was the cause of the mistake; but if he came again, they waited until he had reached his destination, and there in plain sight, while he paused to wipe the dust off his shoes with his pocket handkerchief, they fell upon him with rotten eggs. One dose of this was usually sufficient to keep him clear of the town, but if his bravery exceeded his discretion, and he came the third time, he got the stuffed club treatment, which was sure to be conclusive.

The author recorded a short audio segment with the WJEZ radio station in Pontiac, Illinois, about the treatment of Pontiac boys by the Fairbury boys. This recording can be heard at <https://tinyurl.com/yd33nmya>.

More McDowell Brothers Antics

More stories from *Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars* are shown below.

CHAPTER VII

The Methodists

What with all the feuding and fighting, general drunkenness and wholesale arson, the churches of Fairbury had their work cut out for them. The preaching was of the eternal damnation brand, and, it must be admitted, there were plenty of concrete bad examples at hand.

A visiting revivalist, hit in the head with a chunk of sod or a rock pitched through an open window, was able to draw an even hotter picture of hell. In winter, church meetings were regularly broken up by red pepper thrown on top of the heating stove, reducing the entire congregation to helpless coughing that drove them home. Or, it might be just plain noise that drowned out all the services.

Bean shooters and window pane tappers were commonplace; and so, to be successful, a preacher needed his wits about him. The churches received powerful help in 1876, when John Scibird, the new editor of the Fairbury Blade, moved to town. Himself a Methodist, he had lived in Bloomington, where he had been a postmaster and member of the city council, and editor of a couple of newspapers, one of them being the Pantagraph. He was a man of high morals, besides having a family of his own, and he went right after some of the graceless young members of his church in print.

When the janitor complained that some of the boys, sitting together in the back seats, relieved the tedium of the sermon by spitting tobacco juice into puddles on the floor, Scibird lectured the culprits severely, and threatened to publish their names if it happened again. His reproofs were frequent and blistering, and they covered a rich field.

For instance, the evening services of all the churches were dating time for the young people. The girls came in decorously with their parents for the preaching, while their swains waited outside. Later, as they emerged from the church and came down the steps, each one's particular admirer would advance and ask permission to walk her home. There were no telephones, of course, and it was a spontaneous after church arrangement, whereby each boy took a chance on his girl having come that night.

To avoid standing around outside all to no purpose, when they might be doing something much more interesting, they would go in, one by one, and look the audience over to make certain their girl really was there. Their interruptions were a major annoyance to the congregation. There was the matter, also, of cold drafts around their feet and across the back of their necks every time the door swung; and the breaks in attention drove the ministers to wrath. One of them threatened to put up a slate in the vestibule, and have each girl register as she came in, making a roster that might be consulted easily. The Blade warmly applauded the idea.

Sometimes a couple of the boys would discover that they were both waiting for the same girl,

and then a fight would break out. There was always a lot of yelling along with the fighting, and the attention of the church goers would snap from the minister's "thirdly", to puzzle over who it could be; what started the fight this time; and who was likely to be winning.

Scibird suggested that the boys come in and have their morals improved. He also vigorously belabored them for the way they lined up along the walks after services to whistle at the girls, and make audible comments about them as they passed. He reminded these "tony young men" of the rigid social law forbidding any man who even pretended to be a gentleman, to smoke in the presence of a lady. He furiously added that their tobacco smoke and loud talk made the front walks of the churches like bar rooms; (and it is to be remembered that in those days every woman looked straight ahead when she passed a saloon, unless she was not the respectable kind.)

His phrase, "tony young men", obviously referred to the McDowell boys: Elmer, Tommy and Johnny, sons of Isaac P. Their father, an Elder of the Methodist Church, was a tall thin man with a bald head and chin whiskers; and one who remembered, described him briefly as a "sanctimonious old coot". He left his religion in his pew, and on week days he busily wrung a fortune from a reluctant world with tombstones, real estate, banking, or anything else that came to hand. He was widely considered to drive better than a shrewd bargain, but he displayed the most amazing gullibility about his boys.

Elmer was the oldest of them, and for years they perpetrated most of the mischief around Fairbury. Other boys of the town, as was natural,

did a few things, too: but, if there was any doubt at all about who were the culprits, the McDowell boys instantly received credit. The Methodists forgave them some of their pranks, because of the performances they put on after church when they had removed the wheel taps from their father's buggy.

All the horses and buggies were tied at long hitching racks in front of the church, and the rest of the Methodist congregation lingered to watch Isaac's family drive away. One by one his wheels would fall off; and so, dressed in his Sunday best, he would wrestle them back in place. His boys never raised a finger to help him, but they did express the profoundest sympathy, wondering loudly who could have done such a cowardly thing to such a nice old man. They gave repeat performances of this, undoubtedly by popular request, varying it with the times they hid the taps under the cushions of the back seat so that the wheels kept coming off all the way home.

The boys also exchanged the wheels, front with back, on the Baptist minister's carriage. It caused no damage, but, since the rear wheels were normally the larger, the new angle of the buggy discombobulated the horse and upset the preacher's dignity.

It was these same McDowell boys who were responsible for a circus tent leaving town. They found they did not care for the performance. As the tent had been pitched on a vacant lot by the railroad, and a freight train happened to be switching at the time, they tied one of the guy ropes to the end of the caboose. When the train pulled out, the tent went right along with it,

leaving behind a mightily surprised audience and troupe of performers beneath the stars.

What happened one conference time, however, was a completely different matter. The Methodist ministers of the surrounding country had met at Fairbury to transact annual church business, and to be assigned to their new pulpits. It was customary for the members of a local church to take one or more of the visiting clergymen to their homes for the night, and so Isaac McDowell, being an Elder, invited a couple of the visitors to go home with him. They had another meeting after supper, and as the men walked back to the church after dark, the boys slipped up behind them and walloped the visitors with a piece of rubber hose. Their victims knew enough about the town that they made specific accusations, which the Elder denied in horror. For proof, they all rushed back to the house where they found the boys, even at that early hour, sound "asleep" in bed.

That was far from being the end of the matter, because the boys had discovered an interesting new sport. For several nights, they hung around the dark alley of the Arcade Block, busily cracking all heads that came into reach, and there were a fair number of casualties before they were caught and arrested. They were let off with a fine, but Scibird's next paper, which was published weekly, carried the account of the outrage under the headlines: "Rubber Hose, \$9.45 a foot." After ingenious development, their weapon became known as the "stuffed club", and it was widely used in Fairbury on the after theatre crowds and Saturday night shoppers. The victims were so numerous that when a "club" was finally captured and put on

exhibition at the Blade office, it drew crowds eager to inspect it. It proved to be a canvas sack, six inches in diameter and twelve inches long. It was tightly stuffed with excelsior and coarse salt, and tied to a stick two feet long. As a weapon it had range, weight and flexibility, and quite easily knocked a man unconscious.

For years, anyone attending Quarterly Conference in Fairbury learned to be unusually wary. A few well-placed arrests finally put a stop to the "stuffed club" activities, and in 1890, the exasperated village fathers ended the rest of the trouble with an ordinance providing a twenty-five dollar fine for anyone maliciously disturbing a church service.

The Catholics remained aloof from the other denominations, as their priest preferred. So it happened that one night there was a big dance going on at the new McDowell Hall. The orchestra was good, and a fine time was being had by all, when the priest mounted the stage and announced that he didn't want the girls of his parish dancing with any Protestant boys. Now the McDowell boys, being Methodists, for which the Presbyterians and Baptists gave constant and devout thanks, took this as a personal insult.

Working as a team, and aided by their pals, the brothers selected the Catholic boys, knocked them out, one by one, and threw them down the long stairs. The priest and a number of the girls discreetly retired during the Donnybrook, but enough stayed, so that when the pile of bodies at the foot of the stairs had been completed, the orchestra struck up once more, and "joy was unconfined".

Nicks from the Blade

Various Nicks from the Blade regarding the McDowell family are shown below. Known errors will be identified in [brackets].

Avoca Methodist Church

Until the churches in Fairbury were built in 1858, the nearest one was at Avoca. It had been founded by the McDowell family, and it was called the Pioneer Methodist Church. Early in its history it became famous through all the countryside, for it was the scene of a Revival service where the whole congregation got the jerks. The burying ground was in the churchyard on the side towards the river and to the rear of the building. The church was torn down a number of years ago, because of the dwindling congregation, leaving only the L-shaped cemetery. As long as the James McDowell family lived on their farm at Avoca, each Sunday morning at the close of the preaching service, the minister read an invitation from the family to the entire congregation to come and have dinner with them. The McDowell girls and their mother spent the whole of their Saturdays baking bread and cakes and pies, and doing all the other cooking, since, of course, nothing like that could be done on Sunday, for the Sabbath must be kept holy. Often there would be sixty or a hundred people in the congregation. Some of them had driven in wagons from five miles south where Fairbury would be located. All through the early churches, this pleasant custom of inviting the minister and some friends home to Sunday dinner was observed, though never with the same open armed hospitality of the James McDowell's. The town of Avoca was founded by the family of William McDowell.

There was a general store there, with a post office, and they had a church and a tile factory, and some houses. Woodford McDowell was a lawyer and Justice of the Peace, and, as such, he performed the first wedding in that part of the country. When the new railroad missed Avoca by five miles and the new city of Fairbury was designated, it meant the death of the farmer hamlet. A few enthusiastic citizens moved their houses even before the railroad reached Fairbury. The store buildings were moved by Judge McDowell to the town of McDowell on the Wabash railroad which he founded.

[William McDowell performed the first wedding, not Woodford G. McDowell.]

Before the Epworth League they had Literary Societies in the Church for the young people of about sixteen years old, and they met at the various houses. They sometimes gave "Dialogues". One particular one was given at Filley's. They used the dining room for a stage, and the kitchen for the dressing room. The parents were packed like sardines in the living room and parlor. Charlie Neitx led the singing, and then they gave their play. Harry Cook was going with Lydia Wade and she had a fervid love scene with Johnny McDowell. During rehearsals Harry would stand on the cellar door and look in the dining room window to see about the kissing, so, during the play proper, Johnny just poured it on.

East Hickory Street extended to the River, and was the IP McDowell Addition. Greggs, the family of Mrs. Logan Kring, lived there. There were houses on both sides clear to the river. There was no bridge but a ford. Perry McDowell

lived where Dewey DeMoss lives. Addie and Joe were a couple of his children. A Skinner family owned the Harrington house originally. There were only four houses between Krings and the north side school house. IP McDowell lived in the Ed Kring house next to us. Johnny lived with him when he was first married, later moving into the Friedman house.

[East Hickory Street did not extend east to the River. Actually, it is Indian Creek, not the South Fork of the Vermilion at this point.]

The children were anything but models evidently, during the services. The McDowell boys weren't actually bad but pestiferous, tapping on the glass during the preaching and blowing paper wads from bean shooters.

Livingston Square was where the water tower is now. The north side was the McDowell buildings. The old Swarm house, still standing, in the middle of the block, was the last store to the west. On the corner of First Street was their dry goods store with the Hall above, then their hardware store and bank. Livingston Square was open on the west. On the south was the Arcade Block, still standing. Ben Walton operated a mill where Honegger's now stands. He went into bankruptcy and the farmers lost their grain and went broke. They would sell no more grain to him but he continued to operate the mill until he left and went to California. On the East, the post office was behind the present Dr. Page residence on the alley. The drug store was in front and the post office was in the back

The Aesthetic Society – (From Mother's Autograph Album) February 8, 1882. (The year

she was married) M. Louise Taylor, Emma Dean Rogers, Alta Straight, Ella Beach, Anna Stackpole, Lizzie Stilwell, Emma Bartlett, Kate McDowell, Bessie O. Bryant, Lottie Rogers (Mrs. Dr. Brewer).

I.P. McDowell was the father of the McDowell boys. Elmer was the ringleader.

The Fairbury boys didn't allow the out-of-town boys to call on the Fairbury girl's. The first time they came they were given warning. The second time, if they chose to run the risk, the gang just waited until the victim was in his best clothes and approaching his loved ones house, and then he was thoroughly egged or beaten with stuffed clubs. The affection of only the hardier souls survived the treatment. It was Loy Ramsey, Harry Cook and Johnny McDowell who used the stuffed clubs on Grandfather James.

Hi Ramsey's Drug Store was in the second block, coming from the west end. The second drug store, a block west on the corner from the first one, was a frame building on Wade's corner. James McDowell put up the brick building said "gossips" it was an incentive for him to marry Sadie. Hi was quite the Beau Brummel. The girls were all crazy about him. Then Pawley's Tin shop. 3. Wade and Mahoney livery barn. 4. Central Hotel, 5. Judge McDowell's Law Office (Gray Goose).

What finally ended the gang wars between the small boys of Fairbury was a circus that pitched its tent in Livingston Square. (The circuses used to come to town over the DeMoss Bridge, and the youngsters used to ride out at crack of dawn to meet them). Every boy in town attended

because it had animals with it. During the performance they had an act that was “tough”, and the audience didn’t like it. Nobody ever knew how the fight started, but of course, the McDowell boys got the credit. All at once that old circus battle cry, “Hey, rube!” went up, and those seasoned circus roustabouts grabbed the thing nearest at hand, and went to war. From then on it was entirely immaterial whether a boy lived on the east side of Fairbury or the West side of Fairbury, and that fight was a lulu. During the fun the old animosities disappeared under the urgency of keeping ones neck from getting broken. Logan and several of his friends crawled under the board sidewalk on Main Street and stayed there a couple of hours until it was over. The Doctors had plenty of patching of hides to do then, and one of the McDowell boys spent the next four days in bed.

There was one comic case in all this misfortune. Andy Claudon, who had a bad reputation for crooked dealing, was arrested and brought to trial for burning down the house where he was rooming. The fire had been started by kerosene in the basement, and things looked bad for Andy. He was engaged to Judge McDowell’s daughter, and the old gentleman prepared to defend him. Boiled down, his speech to the jury hinged the whole defense on the question of whether those spots of kerosene went UP the stairs, or whether they went DOWN the stairs, and with his conclusion, the worthies were so befuddled with the Judge’s verbosity that they let Andy go.

[A.B. Claudon actually married the daughter of John McDowell. Her name was Mary Alice McDowell.]

The Glorious Fourth: Fairbury's celebration of 1890 was the grandest in the history of the village. Thousands invaded the place, and were agreeably entertained. A Gala Day. The speaker, Hon. Stephen A. Douglas was the chief attraction of the day. Hon. H.H. McDowell also spoke.

July 8, 1893 Johnny McDowell's hand was shot off by a cannon cracker. Two of the fingers were blown 200 feet. He was standing in front of the bank and two of the fingers were blown across the railroad tracks.

July 22, 1893 W.G. McDowell and wife, of Washington, DC, are visiting relatives and friends here this week.

Judge McDowell is to go to Washington, D.C. for the winter.

A two story brick building is to be built by T.S.O. McDowell at the corner of Locust and Third. The corner front is to be occupied by the First National Bank and the rear by the post office. The Blade has quarters above.

[The building was actually built by T.S.O. McDowell's father, I.P. McDowell.]

March 18, 1887 Judge W.G. McDowell has traded residence property here for real estate in Washington, D.C. and we understand will hereafter reside in Washington most of the time.

The iron columns, steps, etc. for the new buildings of Beach and Dominy and Harry Bartlett, have been placed in position. The fronts

will present a very solid appearance. The iron used in the two fronts weighs 15,000 lbs. L.W. Kring proprietor of the Fairbury Foundry, furnished the work, and it is of excellent design and quality. Mr. Kring also furnished the fine columns which grace the front of the T.S.O. McDowell building.

[It was the I.P. McDowell building.]

Judge McDowell is to go to Washington, D.C. permanently. Johnny McDowell has become the bookkeeper in the First National Bank

Judge McDowell of Washington, D.C., writes us that he and Mrs. McDowell will spend the next four weeks at Ocean Grove, N.J., a popular summering place of the east.

A horse belonging to Will Nimmo fell into an open well on the McDowell lots west of the Fairbury House Thursday evening. He was dragged out by hard work, and will probably get along alright. Mr. McDowell should cover up that well, as it is very dangerous in that locality.

November 6, 1884 John Will McDowell owned the Avoca tile factory.

T.S.O. McDowell, more familiarly known as Tommy McDowell, attained his majority last Sunday, and received as a birthday gift from his father, I.P. McDowell, 80 acres of land near Pontiac.

CHAPTER 12

Fairbury, Nebraska

In 1963, The Jefferson County Historical Society published a booklet titled Egress of the West. It documents the founding of Fairbury, Nebraska.

This booklet is no longer available. The primary text portion of this booklet, which includes the role of the McDowell family, was extracted and shown below.

The Beginning of FAIRBURY

compiled by

LEVI H. BLOYD

James B. Mattingly, a frontiersman, was among the first pioneers to venture into Gage County, Nebraska, settling there in 1857, where he took an active part in the early history and government of that county. While living there he owned and operated a sawmill, and freighted from the Missouri river over the Nebraska City and Centre Overland Trails westward via Jefferson County.

In 1866 when the bulk of the trail business from the Missouri river was withdrawn from the eastern end of the Central Overland Trail due to the railroads reaching into Nebraska, Mattingly like other freighters, trail workers, station operators, store keepers, ranchers, and settlers along the trail had to turn to other enterprises for a livelihood. Some left to go further west but the majority stayed by the land, turning to farming and livestock raising.

Jefferson County had two settlements before 1865. One was on Big Sandy Creek, west of Powell, where camping facilities of water and timber were plentiful, and the trail business from the junction at the trails from St. Joseph, Missouri, and Nebraska City enticed early immigrants to establish a settlement, it being the largest settlement along the trail through this area of Nebraska and Kansas. The first county government business was transacted at Big Sandy. Rev. Ives Marks actually started the first settlement for a town when he settled on Rose Creek along the west line of the county in 1862 where he established a saw and grist

mill. A settlement sprung up around his mill and it was first called Marks Mill and later Rose Creek City.

Large overland trail companies, such as the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company, Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company, the Pony Express, Ben Holladay Overland Mail & Express, and Wells Fargo & Company, had carried on big business over the Central Overland Trail route through Jefferson County for a number of years. When the business was withdrawn from this section of the trail in 1866 the territory was hit hard, financially.

Mattingly was among those men who realized the advantages to help themselves laid in getting in on the town site opportunities. They knew the St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad was planning to lay its rails up the Little Blue River Valley, which eventually would open Jefferson County to the eastern markets.

Nebraska was still a territory and the present Jefferson County was named Jones County from 1856 to 1867. In 1867 Nebraska became a state and the present Jefferson and Thayer counties were joined together as one county under the name of Jefferson. The present Jefferson County, located in the very southeastern part of Nebraska, is the fourth county from the Missouri river in the first tier of counties bordering the State of Kansas.

In 1866 Mattingly sold his land in Gage County and moved his family to Jefferson County, settling on the southeast quarter of section fifteen, township two, north of range two, east of the sixth Principal Meridian. On a bend of the Little Blue river, about two miles below the old trail, he erected his water powered sawmill. The site of which was the one hundred block on the south side of Third street. He and his son, Joel, continued to do some freighting on the trails.

The following year Mattingly got around to filing for the land May 21, 1867. The record reads: "Whereas in pursuance of the Act of Congress approved July 2, 1862 entitled an Act donating Public Lands to the several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanics Arts there has been deposited in the General Land Office script No. 239 for one quarter section of land in favor of the state of Indiana duly assigned by the proper authority of the said State to James Mattingly with evidence that the same has been located upon the SE1/4 of Sec. 15 in T2N, R2E in the District of Lands subject to sale at Brownville, Nebraska, containing one hundred and sixty acres according to the official Plat of the survey of the said land returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General."

There is some data recorded in this area on James Mattingly. The following from Dobbs History of Gage County, 1918:

“James B. Mattingly was born in the state of Kentucky, on the 8th day of April, 1818, near Elizabethtown, Harden county. In 1841 he migrated to the Territory of Illinois. and settled in Moultrie county. He was of a roving disposition, and leaving Illinois, about 1847 he removed to Iowa; from there, in 1849, to Platte county, Missouri. In 1857 he left Missouri and started west along the Oregon Trail in an aimless search for a new location. At Ash Point, a station on the old highway, he struck a dim trail and followed it to the Otoe and Missouri Indian village. Guided by reports of desirable locations further north, he passed the site of Blue Springs (Gage County), and finally selected a quarter-section of land in the southwest corner of Rockland township, on Mud creek, in June 1857. About the year 1866 he sold his homestead to James Millard, and moved to Jefferson County, Nebraska, where he entered a tract of land, eighty acres of which now form the most populous and wealthy portion of the city of Fairbury. Shortly after arriving in Jefferson county he engaged somewhat extensively in the freighting business along the Oregon Trail for a few months, an occupation which he had followed also while residing in Gage County.

When in 1867, the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad put an end to the freighting business along the old trail, Mattingly established himself on the Little Blue river, within pistol shot of the courthouse in Fairbury, in the saw mill business, and while engaged in sawing lumber for homesteaders who were rapidly following into that section of country, he was visited one day by Woodrow G. McDowell, a resident of Fairbury, Illinois. The St. Joseph & Grand Island Railway was pointing up the Little Blue, and McDowell, with keen prevision, had selected the present site of Fairbury as the location of the county seat of Jefferson county. Mattingly possessed in a remarkable degree the imagination which always goes with adventure, and McDowell had no difficulty in getting him to enter into his scheme to found a town, to be called Fairbury, which could be the chief city of that entire section of country. McDowell had obtained title to eighty acres adjoining Mattingly's, They jointly laid out and platted the town of Fairbury, the history of which has more than fulfilled the dreams of both its founders.

James Bartholomew Mattingly belonged to that class of men which is ever adrift in the fore front of advancing civilization. After investing some money in the town of Endicott, in the vain endeavor to boom it into a city of importance, and losing heavily in the venture, he, with his son, Joel Thomas, his wife, and daughter Polly, migrated to the Pacific slope. All are dead now, but the son, Joel Thomas, who lives at Condon, Oregon, in fairly comfortable circumstances. Mr. Mattingly himself died October 19, 1907, aged eighty-nine years. At the time of his death he was a resident of a little town in northern Washington.

James Mattingly was a wonderfully active man; his occupations were diverse; he was at once a soldier, a freighter on the Oregon Trail, a speculator, a farmer, a miller, a carpenter, and dabbled in many other occupations. With many faults of character and of mental equipment and attitude, he was at bottom a reliable citizen and active in public welfare.

He was county commissioner of Gage county in 1861-62-63; he was deputy sheriff, bailiff of the courts, Justice of the Peace and occupied other civil positions of trust, it not of profit, in Gage County.

He taught the first Sunday School in Rockford township and one of the first in the county. This Sunday school was organized in April 1859. The writer of this volume with his brother, and Joel Thomas Mattingly were his only pupils, although the school lasted two or three years. James B. Mattingly was as eccentric a character as he was a picturesque one, and when he died, the world could have better spared a better man."

From Andreas History of Nebraska, 1882:

"Among other early pioneers who are still residents of the county (Jefferson) may be mentioned George Wisell (Weisel), H. M. Ross, Rev. Ives Marks, W. T. Brawner, William Babcock, William Smith, Edward Howks (Hawkes, the Bakers (Dan, Andy, William, Joseph, John and Henry). J. B. Mattingly, T. J. Holt and the McCaulas boys (David C. and James Leroy McCandles), and many others. . .

As another illustration we will give some facts concerning the Otoes and early settlers of Jefferson and Gage, in which counties the Otoe Reservation was located. Mr. Mattingly lived near the Indians, and was like many others annoyed by their begging. They becoming hungry for beef killed one of his oxen. He went to the agent and demanded pay for his ox. The Indian treaty grants every white man three times the value of the animal killed or stolen by the Indians, to be paid out of their annuity. They had offered him, through the agency, \$100 for his ox, consequently he would receive \$300. Mr. Mattingly agreed to take \$200 if the agent would lend him a team to use until the amount was paid. This was accepted, and when Mr. Mattingly received the handsome price for his ox he bought a heifer for \$20 and had with them a feast, from which time they became his most faithful friends, aiding him in sickness and warning him of the approach of hostile tribes. In 1862 the settlers of Gage and Jefferson were frightened over the report that the Otoes were about to massacre all the settlers in these counties. The report was started. by the agent, who colored it by adding the chief could not control his braves. Mr. Mattingly went into the Council Room to ascertain the facts and, if necessary, petition in favor of the settlers. But he found the report to be false. They smoked with him the peace pipe, and vowed their friendliness to him and the

settlers. This satisfied the settlers and doubtless avoided trouble, as they were arming for defense and might have precipitated their own fall.

June 22, 1862, near O'Fowlen's Bluffs, about 150 miles west of Kearney, J. B. Mattingly was attacked by five Indians as he was driving towards the fort. They were sent by a white man who had tried to buy one of the four horses Mr. Mattingly was driving. On account of price and not caring about parting with the horse he refused the offer when the man threatened him. The Indians approached from the rear and fired upon Mr. Mattingly and the ball striking the wagon near his head was the first warning of their presence he had. He dropped his lines and made ready for an attack by securing his two revolvers and covering his body with a thick blanket. His horses became frightened as they always will, on the approach of Indians, and leaving the road ran violently across the prairie. The Indians with their yell of frenzy, gave chase.

With the first round from his revolver he wounded one in the leg, but every shot in the second round took effect as they rode up to the wagon, giving him the advantage. Mr. Mattingly received five wounds but they did not prove fatal. One arrow made an opening in his trachea which might have proven fatal had he not had with him a court-plaster with which he secured the wound until he reached the fort. The Indians were never heard of afterward, three of whom it is quite reasonable to presume, were killed, judging from the manner in which they were borne away by their horses. The man that put the Indians up to the deed made safe his retreat as soon as he ascertained the result of the encounter.

Fairbury, the county seat, is a beautiful city of about 1,000 inhabitants, occupying an eligible plateau on the second bottom of the Little Blue, near the geographical center of the county. . . .

The town was laid out in 1869 by Messrs. McDowell and Mattingly, but the period of growth commences with '72, the year the St. Joe & Denver, now the St. Joe & Western Railway was completed, since which time, excepting '75, the year succeeding the grasshopper scourge, the growth has been steady and substantial.

Mr. McDowell gave the place its name, choosing the name of his previous residence, Fairbury, Ill. It became a post office in 1869, J. B. Mattingly being the first postmaster, with a salary of \$1 per month.

There were two mails weekly from Seneca, It has since become an office of the third class and an international money order office, receiving seventeen mails per week. In 1870 J. R. Brown succeeded Mr. Mattingly, who in '71 was succeeded by George Cross, who has held the position ever since. September 24, 1875, it was

organized as a city of the second class, having reached the required number of inhabitants.

Fairbury has always been visited by large numbers of the Otoe Indians, owing to its proximity to the Reservation, but they gave no trouble, save the annoyance of begging, for that with hunting seems to be the Indians natural occupation, In the spring and fall nearly the whole tribe would pass through the town to and from their semi-annual buffalo hunting expeditions.

To James B. Mattingly goes the credit for starting the town of Fairbury, Nebraska, for it was around his sawmill that the settlement took root. Martin C. Hulburt, grandfather of Roy Hulburt of the Fairbury Nurseries, who freighted on the old trail, told that Mattingly had a sawmill on the river before Fairbury was platted and that he allowed people to build on his land. There were several small buildings erected near the sawmill which were later moved into the city. There is no doubt that the buildings were erected by Mattingly and others to meet the initial needs on the frontier, such as accommodating the settlers bringing saw logs to the mill. Some logs were floated down the river to the mill making it necessary to furnish night lodging for the men at times.

The settlers broke trails that became roads to the sawmill from different directions over the county. Overland travelers seeking homes, land investments and homesteads, followed the trails to the mill seeking information on the land. This traffic was influential in the settlement, helping to introduce a market for everyday commodities.

This urgency probably prompted Sidney Mason and his wife to start a place on Mattingly's land to board and room the overland travelers and settlers. They first constructed a dugout on the corner west of the post office and later erected Fairbury's first hotel on the site where the post office now stands, Fifth and D streets. John R. Brown probably helped furnish some of the farm produce for the immigrants and eventually became Fairbury's first store keeper.

This intermittent traffic on the frontier inspired other settlers in the area to practice their trades in and near the settlement thus promoting more traffic. Horace D. Clark, whose land joined Mattingly on the south took up blacksmithing, doing the work in the lean-to on his log cabin home. He was Fairbury's first blacksmith. As research continues it will be shown that some of Fairbury's first citizens and professional men lived on homesteads and land outside the settlement while maintaining offices and businesses in the settlement.

In the fall of 1868 Woodford G. McDowell, an attorney, judge and financial man of Fairbury, Illinois, came to Nebraska's frontier to get in on the land investment.

He went by the way of Beatrice where he purchased city lots and land in Gage county. Learning of the land opportunities in Jefferson County he proceeded on to this territory to look over the lay of the land that he too could get in on quick land profits that was in the offering with the not too far off coming of the St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad.

By team and spring wagon he followed the course of the Little Blue River, the route to be taken by the iron horse, selecting land likely to make good town sites. In the frontier trail town of Meridian near the west line of Jefferson County, McDowell purchased a number of lots.

As he covered the territory he found that James Mattingly possessed the ideal town site for a centrally located county seat on a beautiful bend of the Little Blue river. On Mattingly's land the railroad would likely lay its rails. McDowell learned that the section of land adjoining Mattingly's on the east had not been filed on, he filed on the west half and the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter and the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section fourteen, paying \$1.25 per acre. The following year, 1869, he purchased the rest of the section.

McDowell readily recognized Mattingly's ideal set up and the value of this frontiersman's incentive to help Settlement on this wilderness, thus promoting civilization's foothold. McDowell needed Mattingly in the plans circulating foremost in his thoughts. He quickly acquainted himself with Mattingly and made known his plans to plat a town for a county seat.

His first approach to entice Mattingly into the town site partnership was a proposition to help Mattingly to secure a steam saw mill to replace the water powered one, thus helping to step up native lumber production. McDowell wanted the upper hand and he schemingly devised plans to practically give him the management he desired by entangling Mattingly into debt to him.

On his first visit to Jefferson County in the fall of 1868 McDowell purchased and filed on the 160 acres adjoining Mattingly on the east and a few other scattered land sites within the county. Just what plans and arrangements he made with Mattingly for plotting Fairbury before he returned to his home in Illinois for the winter will probably never all be known. The name of the town was agreed upon and Mattingly did go ahead with construction, according to the following old letter now in the possession of Mrs. Eddie Wehling of Steele City, written by her grandfather to his wife, dated Jan. 17, 1869:

"Since you left here there has been a town laid out in one mile at here, by the name of Fairbury. They are laying the foundation for a large store house, and there

will be a steam mill here next week. McDowell is at the head of Mattingly has got a (permit in) for a post office. They will be a black Smith here tomorrow."

This letter was written by William Baker to his wife Nancy, who had left early in the fall of 1868 to visit her parents in Missouri. Part of the letter is faded out and is filled in as believed it originally read. The first line in the letter indicates that some surveying must have been accomplished in 1868.

The original survey map of the plat of Fairbury is not in existence. From what we find in the records the early survey is somewhat confusing. There is a possibility that Mattingly had the first survey made but in the later records McDowell endeavors to credit the honor to himself. Recorded Nov. 22. 1869 was what was called the "Town Plat of Fairbury, Neb.", with no map recorded but showing that Block 1 through 15 vacant, not surveyed into lots; Block 16. Lots 1 through 12; Block 17, Lots 1 through 12; Block 18. Lots 1 through 18; Block 19. Lots 1 through 12; Block 20, Lots 1 through 12; Block 21 & 22 vacant; Block 23, Lots 1 through 12; Block 24, Lots 1 through 18; Block 25, Public Square; Block 26, Lots 1 through 18; Block 27, Lots 1 through 12; Block 28 & 29 vacant; Block 30, Lots 1 through 12; Block 31, Lots 1 through 12; Block 32, Lots 1 through 18, Block 33, Lots 1 through 12; Block 34, Lots 1 through 12; Block 35 8x 36 vacant; Block 37, Lots 1 through 12; Block 38, Lots 1 through 12; Block 39, Lots 1 through 12; Block 40, Lots 1 through 12; Block 41, Lots 1 through 12; Block 42 & 43 vacant; Block 44, Lots 1 through 12; Block 45, Lots 1 through 12; Block 46. Lots 1 through 12; Block 47, 48 & 49 vacant.

The above portion does not carry a date but just below it is recorded: "County Surveyors office Jefferson County, Nebraska, Sept. 22, 1869. I hereby certify that the lots, blocks, streets and alleys of blocks 24, 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39 & 40 are well and accurately staked out and marked according to the within plat, (signed) N. E. Davis, county surveyor of Jefferson County, Neb." The plat mentioned is not in the book.

Also recorded with the above:

"State Of Nebraska, County of Jefferson. On this 4th day of October, AD. 1869, personally came before me a Notary Public in and for said county and State named above James B. Mattingly and acknowledged that he is the Proprietor and owner of the east half of the S.E. 1/4 of Sec. 15, town two Range, two East. Said land includes the west half of the town or Fairbury. (signed) J. B. Mattingly, Proprietor, A. Lewis Shader, Notary Public."

"State Of Nebraska County Of Jefferson. On this 15th day of October AD. 1889 personally came before me, I. N. Thompson, clerk of Jefferson County, Neb., W.

G. McDowell to me personally known as the identical person who executed the foregoing Plat of the town of Fairbury as proprietor of the East half of said town it being on the W 1/2 of SW 1/4 Sec. 14 town two Range two East—and having subscribed the same in my presence acknowledged it to be his voluntary act deed. (signed) I. N. Thompson, Clerk."

What is claimed to be the original surveyor's copy or the plat, made and kept by surveyor, N. E. Davis, is now in the possession of the Jefferson County Historical Society. It was sent by his daughter, Mrs., Sarah E. McCormick of Adrian, Oregon, March 30, 1955, to Helen Coffman, then secretary of the Society. This old map reveals changes were made in the original survey. Here is Mrs. McCormick's letter:

"Am mailing today by registered letter the original plot of Fairbury as my father, N. E. Davis surveyed it in 1869—in the fall of that year. It must have been Sept. or Oct. Only events of family history help me fix the date. My father was a bachelor when he made the survey. He returned to Wilson, N.Y., in Nov. in plenty of time for the Thanksgiving family gathering, was married on the first day of Dec. and he and his bride came immediately to his homestead south of Fairbury and his fall surveying work was all done before his trip east.

One item you may be interested in—my father, when asked, would not set a price for his service in surveying the town so they gave him a lot or two on main street for pay. This was lot 6 or lots 5 and 6 in Block 10 on D street, am not sure of the size of the plot. He held them for a while and, thinking Fairbury would never be an important city sold the plot for five dollars. This corner was for years, the location of the John Price hardware store. My father sometimes laughed about his business deal. But it was thought for years that Endicott, not Fairbury would become the county seat. Am not sure it Jefferson Co. was reduced to its present size by 1869.

My father came to settle in Jefferson County south of Fairbury in 1865 and I cannot remember him referring to doing any surveying work outside of the present boundaries of Jefferson but of this I am not sure.

The figures scrawled on the back of this map are father's notations or city measurements. I fear the journey will be hard on this map for the creases are just beginning to break in places. Please let me know how it fares. I am glad to place it where it will be cherished."

Mrs. McCormick states in the letter that her father was given a lot or two in Block 10. Such is not recorded in the Records of Deeds. The block 10 mentioned and

shown so marked on the old map is also shown marked Block 33 but is in pencil on the map and is now known as Block 33 in the original town of Fairbury.

The old map shows the first blocks of the town were laid out south of Fifth Street with seven blocks in a row and numbered from one to twenty-eight. The map shows all these blocks laid out in lots. Something is wrong because some of the blocks on the southern tier were never surveyed into lots—unless the blocks were situated in different location than the present location of the original town plat. The old map also shows just one tier of blocks above Fifth Street with all surveyed into lots except the outside ones, block 15 and 21. Written at the top of the map. “two tier Blocks and 30 ft. st. North.” On the back side of map are the measurements of blocks, lots, streets and alleys, and “Surveyed May 11th, 187..... ”

Mrs. McCormick’s brother, the late Jason Davis, told that his father had his choice of a lot or five dollars for his survey of Fairbury and that he took the money. Both children may be right for their father surveyed half the town on Mattingly’s land and half on McDowell’s land, undoubtedly both men paid him.

Another record showed up where a lot was to go to a certain person but the deed records do not show it. The record reads:

“Fairbury, Neb, Oct. 23, 1869. This indenture made this 23rd day of October 1869 witnesses that for the consideration of two hundred dollars to be paid in lumber or sawing against the first 1870, and one lot on west side of Square and the 3d from southwest corner in the town of Fairbury, Neb. I, William Snook have sold to J. B. Mattingly all my right, title and interest in and to the Steam Saw Mill situated near the said town of Fairbury, Neb.—together with all appurtenances thereto belonging.

And I the said J. B. Mattingly do agree to make the said Snook a warranty deed to said lot, and to pay the said Snook two hundred dollars in lumber or sawing against the first day of June 1870 provided however if the said Snook fails to furnish at said mill the required amount of logs to make said lumber then the said Mattingly has a reasonable time to furnish the same. (signed) J.B. Mattingly, J.W. Snook."

The above speaks of the steam saw being situated near the town of Fairbury when actually it was erected in Block 36 on the river in the original town. In the deed records, Dec. 15, 1871 is recorded the location of the sawmill: ", . . Also the undivided one-third part of Blocks Nos. 36 & 49 in said town of Fairbury saving

and excepting the Steam Mill property now on the said blocks which is hereby specially reserved to the above grantor."

When McDowell persuaded Mattingly to join him in the town project in the fall of 1868 he promised to ship a steam saw mill to the frontier to replace the water—powered one already in operation. Mattingly then formed a partnership with J. W. Snook on Jan. 1. 1869 to engage in the business of operating a Steam Saw Mill at Fairbury.

In the spring of 1869 when McDowell returned to Jefferson County to push his town project and enlarge upon his land holdings he found Fairbury had been made a post office Feb. 8, 1869 With James B. Mattingly as postmaster. His first business was attending to the terms and arrangement of the sawmill to be shipped from Illinois,

James Mattingly and James W. Shook purchased of W. G. McDowell on April 28, 1869. machinery and fixtures for a steam saw mill for \$3,596 according to Mattingly's story:

" . . . Mill & machinery claimed to be in good condition and ready to be put up and started at once, and that said mill and machinery was very low at the price asked, and that he (McDowell) would not sell it for so low a price but for the reason that the said plaintiff (McDowell) was largely interested in the town of Fairbury in Jefferson County and. wished to see it built up, and as the mill was to be used at Fairbury he would sell it for less than it was worth, as a steam saw mill started here would add considerably to the business of the place and tend to build up the town and make property in and around it more valuable.

That at the time this defendant (Mattingly) and the said Snook entered into said agreement with the plaintiff (McDowell) all the parties were in the town of Fairbury in the said County of Jefferson and the mill machinery and fixtures were in the state of Illinois. That neither this defendant (Mattingly) or the said Snook had ever seen the said mill machinery or fixtures and in making said purchase they relied wholly and solely on the representations of the plaintiff (McDowell) as to the condition and value of the same and that they had no chance to examine said mill machinery and fixtures until they arrived in Fairbury in said county and not until long after the notes had been executed and delivered."

McDowell said \$2,500 was the price on the mill and that the balance of the \$3,596 was for money advanced and loaned to Mattingly and Snook. As the notes read "for value received," McDowell was instrumental in seeing that no mention was made of the steam saw mill in compiling the notes and the mortgage he took again their land.

The mortgage reads: "James B. Mattingly and wife and J.W. Snook to Woodford G. McDowell. In consideration of the sum of thirty eight hundred and ninety six (\$3,896.00) dollars paid to James B. Mattingly and J. W. Shook by Woodford G. McDowell of Gage County in the State of Nebraska the receipt of which sum is hereby acknowledged, we James B. Mattingly and Nancy W. his wife and J. W. Shook of Jefferson County in the state of Nebraska, do hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey to Woodford G. McDowell, his heirs and assigns forever, the following described pieces or parcels of land or messuages situated in the County of Jefferson and State of Nebraska, to wit:

The east half of Section No. Fourteen (14) in Township No. one (1) North, of Range No. one (1) East; and the South West quarter of the North East quarter and the West half of the South East quarter of Section No. Fifteen (15) in Township Two (2) North of Range No. Two (2) East, and the South half of the South West quarter of Section No. Nineteen (19) and the East half of the North East quarter, and the North West quarter of the North East quarter of Section No. thirty-two (32) in Township No. three (3) North, of Range No. 2 East of 6th Principal Meridian containing in all six hundred and forty acres (640) according to Government Survey.

To have and to hold the said granted premises with all rights, privileges dower interests and appurtenances thereto or pertaining, and we do covenant that at the delivery hereof we are the owners of the premises herein granted, seized of a perfect title thereto 'that said premises are clear of all encumbrances and that we will warrant and defend the said Woodford G. McDowell and his heirs and assigns in quiet and peaceable possession of said premises against all persons claiming a right thereto the conditions of the foregoing deed are such, that whereas James B. Mattingly and J.W. Snook justly indebted to the said Woodford G. McDowell in the sum of Thirty Eight Hundred and Ninety Six (\$3896.00) Dollars, as evidenced by five certain promissory notes as follows made and executed jointly by the said James B. Mattingly and J. W. Shook bearing even date here with due payable with ten per cent interest to be paid annually as follows to wit:

The first in the sum of three (300) hundred dollars due Nov. 1st, 1869. The second in the sum of Five Hundred and Sixty Dollars (\$560.00) due Feb, 1st, 1870, the third in the sum of Five Hundred and Sixty (\$560.00) Dollars due May 1st, 1870, the fourth and fifth in the sums of Twelve Hundred Thirty Eight (\$1238.00) Dollars each Respect—fully due May 1st, 1874.

Now if the said sum of money with interest thereon shall be paid according to the true tenor and effect of said promissory note then this instrument shall become

null and void, but if the said sum or money with interest be not paid at the time and in the manner prescribed in said note then this instrument shall be in full force and effect.

In testimony we hereunto set our hands and seals this 28th day of April AD. 1869, (signed) James B. Mattingly, Nancy W. (her X mark) Mattingly, J.W. Snook."

The court records of 1875 is one of the very few records to be found giving data on the steam sawmill. On the 16th day of May, 1877, a decree was rendered in the District Court on the mortgage giving McDowell the land listed therein.

Horace D. Clark gave this data in Dawson's Pioneer Tales: "When we came (1868), the Mattingly's lived in a log house, near the present site of the planing mill, where he was erecting a steam sawmill. He got the boiler and machinery from Judge McDowell in Fairbury, Ill., hauling it from the Missouri river with ox-teams, and had it set up and running in the fall of 1869. In this old cabin (Mattingly's log cabin) the first Sunday schools and church of Fairbury were held, in 1869-70. Rev. Mark Noble preached several sermons therein during the early part of 1870, until he could secure a better place. The Sunday school was eventually moved to rooms above the newly built store buildings around the public square. Tom Warden, Mrs. Clark and Sidney Mason were the leading spirits of the Sunday-school and church work.

The first Fourth of July celebration was held in J. B. Mattingly's sawmill, in 1869. The building was about completed, and the machinery was not yet in place; so we staged our celebration within "

Marcia Babcock told the following concerning Fairbury's first 4th of July: "But the one (July 4 celebration) held in Fairbury in 1869 many of the old residents remember. It was held, I think, in Mattingly's unfinished mill and was in many respects similar to the one held in 1870. The speaker's platform was a wagon placed conveniently. M. H. Weeks, A. L. Shader and J. R. Brown were some of the orators.

Mr. Weeks says that when he came to the celebration he drove a span of mules and that his cow, his speckled calf and pig all followed him and came too. When he went home at night they followed him home, swimming the river where it was deep. He crossed the river near the Jim Price farm—then Babcock's, and as there was no road and the grass so high the pig had to stop every once in a while and stand on his hind legs to see where the calf had gone

The flag used on this occasion and several successive ones has quite an interesting history as it was made by the ladies of Fairbury. J. B. Mattingly, a patriotic man

and one of the founders of the town, thought they ought to have a flag so he donated the material which was some kind of wool goods. The ladies—Mesdames Ryburn, mother of Howard Ryburn, H. D. Clark, J. Galbraith and J. R. Brown and the Misses Josie and Mollie Ryburn met at the home of Mrs. J. R. Brown and made the flag. There was quite a discussion about the proper way to make it, but Mrs. Clark, who had brought a flag to the county with her, cut the flag and superintended the making, which was not a small task as there were no sewing machines and the stars had to be sewed on both sides in exactly the same place. Mrs. Clark says she thinks there were thirty-four stars and that the one representing Nebraska was the first put on. This flag was afterwards given to the tribe of Otoe Indians that captured and brought in the murderer Whitewater for trial.”

Mattingly was one of the settlers, this frontier was their home, they had put down stakes to fight the wilderness and aid civilization. With what little they possessed they shared in some small way together enjoying each others fellowship in various ways while conquering the wilderness, building homes and turning the sod to cultivate the land.

McDowell kept advancing his plans to make Fairbury the county seat. He promoted his agreement to the commissioners of Jefferson County:

“Know all men by these presents, that we, W. G. McDowell and N. S. McDowell of the County of Livingston and State of Illinois, are held and firmly bound unto the County Commissioners of the County of Jefferson and State of Nebraska for the use of the inhabitants of the eastern half of said county formerly known as the County of Jones in the state aforesaid. In the penal sum of twelve thousand dollars lawful currency of the United States, for the payment of which well ourselves, our heirs, executors, administer these presents, signed with our hands dated the fourteenth day of November A.D. 1869.

The condition of the above obligation is such that the said parties of the first part have this day made an agreement with the said party of the second part to donate to them the undivided one-third interest in the East half of the town of Fairbury in the county and state afore-said for the purpose of erecting Public Buildings in said town for the use of said

County of Jones, when the same has been detached and set apart from the old County of Jefferson as aforesaid and the county seat of said county permanently located in the said town of Fairbury and they the said parties of the first part further agree to give to the said parties of the second part for the purpose aforesaid a one-third interest in the Southwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of section 14

in Township two North of Range two East in said County, when said county seat is located at Fairbury permanently.

Provided however the said parties of the second part for and in consideration of the aforesaid donation of town lots, and land as aforesaid do hereby covenant and agree to and with the said parties of the first part that they will as the County Court of said County of Jefferson do all in their Power to assist in the division of the said county as it is now situated to have the original boundaries of Jones County set apart and re-established as the County of Jones, and the county seat of said county permanently located in the said town of Fairbury, and that they will hold the County Courts, and do the County business of said county as it now stands at Fairbury and make arrangements to hold all the terms of the District Court for said county at Fairbury, and use their influence both officially and personally in securing the organization of said Jones County and location of the county seat at Fairbury, and if necessary to assist in circulation of Petitions among the people of said county to be presented to the next regular session of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska and ask them to enact a law creating the county of Jones, and the county seat at Fairbury, or authorizing a vote of the people of said county to be taken for that purpose.

And the said parties of the first part reserves the right to sell any of said lots in Fairbury at fair average cash prices and make warranty deeds for said lots to actual purchasers and on the payment of one-third part of the purchase money received for said lots to the treasure of said county, the said party shall be released from the obligation or making the deed for said lots to the parties of the second part, for said lots thus sold and transferred to said individuals.

And the said parties of the first part, further agrees that in case the said parties of the second part prefer to have it so that they will make or cause to be made a good and sufficient warranty deed to the following described lots and parcels of land in lieu of the one-third interest as aforesaid to the said parties of the first part for the purposes, or to any of the purchasers thereof, as they may direct at any time after the county seat of said county is permanently located in Fairbury as aforesaid.

Description of Lots and land as follows, to-wit: All of block 14, 29, 30, 43; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Block 40; Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Block 45; Lots 10, 11, 12 Block 13; Lots 11, 12 Block 2; Lots 3, 4, 9 Block 3; Lots 3, 6 Block 4; Lots 3, 4 Block 11; Lot 3 Block 17; Lot 15 Block 18; Lots 6, 10 Block 26; Lot 3 Block 32; Lots 1, 2, 3 Block 46; Lots 2, 3, 4 Block 39; Lots 9, 10 Block 31; Lots 3, 4 Block 15; Lots 3, 4, 9, 10 Block 41.

Also the undivided one-third interest in the Southwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of section 14 in township two north of Range two East of the 6th principal Meridian in said county.

It is further agreed by the said party of the second part that they will offer for sale and keep in the market any and all of said lots, blocks and lands as above described or in subdivisions to suit purchasers and sell said lots at fair cash prices to actual settlers at any and all times cooperate and work with the said parties of the first part for, the general interest of the town and county and the settlement and improvement of the same, and the said parties of the Second part may in their discretion offer and sell said lots, blocks and lands at public sale on such terms and time as in their judgment and discretion may seem proper and to the best interest of said town and county. It is mutually understood and agreed that the above obligations are to be in full force and binding on all heirs, executors, and administrators and assigns and successors in office on the part of the parties of the second part.

(signed) W. J. McDowell, N. S. McDowell, A. J. Hobbs, G. Weisel, Henry Nelson, Co. Comm.,

P.S.—It is mutually understood and agreed to that in case the parties of the second part elect to receive the undivided one-third interest in the town as herein set forth, that they are to credit the one-third of the lots donated for Public purposes, that is for churches, schools and buildings built by individuals the lots having been donated to them for that purpose.

(signed) W. G. McDowell

Recorded Feb. 13, 1871.

McDowell realized a newspaper would help him in his promotion plans. He contacted the editor of the Beatrice newspaper. The following is a copy of Theodore Coleman's letter to George Cross which brought this young man and his wife to Fairbury:

"Beatrice, Nebr., May 28, 1870. Dear George: I have only time to write you a hurried letter. A family of wealthy men by the name of McDowell own a town site 30 miles west of here on the Little Blue called Fairbury, and they are anxious to get a paper started there, I told them I would write to you, and they said tell him to come along: we'll bolster him up. They are large land owners, shrewd but liberal business men, and a paper would be greatly to their own advantage that they would help it to any reasonable extent. The town is small—about 15 houses in it now: but in the opinion of all who have seen it, it is bound to make a place of

some importance. The St. Joe and Denver railroad is laid out through it, and is now being built. It will be the county seat of Jones county as soon as the next winter's legislature makes a division of Jefferson county which they will do.

There is water power there, and it is the center of trade for a good scope of country; no competing towns near it. I candidly think its future is sure. A six column paper can be put in for about \$800, and they would give you lots and put you up an office, and help you to subscribers and ads. If you want to go on the "front" for a couple of years, I think the results will compensate you for the trial. These towns grow very rapidly, and if your capital is small you can't do better than stick stakes in one of them. You can write me at once of your idea of the matter directing to Orange, Wis., as I shall be there about the 6th of June. If you conclude to favorably consider the matter, you will do best, I think, to get your office at St. Joe, and if you want to come out and take a look, come prepared to stay, as the cost of travel is too great to allow traveling back and forth. It will cost you about \$50 to reach here. You would want a printer. The profits would be small for a year or so, but the future for papers that start in this way is good. They want an out and out Republican sheet. You can't buy out the smallest paper for less than \$1500, and it is hard for a man to get into satisfactory partnership. Yours truly, Theodore,"

The Commission Proceedings shows that the county government was interested in making Fairbury the county seat:

"October 18, 1870.

Whereas complaints have been made to the County Commissioners claiming that a certain contract entered into by the Proprietors of Fairbury and the County Commissioners of Jefferson County is considered void and of no effect.

Therefore be it resolved, by the Board of County Commissioners that Judge McDowell, J. B. Mattingly, B. T. Ryburn and others who entered into a contract with said County Commissioners to donate a certain portion of lots in the Town of Fairbury, Neb., together with other property surrounding said Town and also to furnish suitable rooms for Commissioners Court and other offices, be and are hereby requested to give a further guarantee that they will comply with and faithfully fulfill the stipulations of said contract without default on the part of said contractors."

"Nov. 2, 1870: D. C. Jenkins appeared and obtained the bonds of J. B. Mattingly and B. T. Ryburn to donate certain village lots and other lands to the county for county purposes on condition that the county seat is located permanently at

Fairbury. Also had drawn up land for like purposes to be executed by W. G. and N. S. McDowell,”

The article of agreements made by the other men:

Know all men by these presents, that I, J. B. Mattingly, of the County of Jefferson and State of Nebraska are held and firmly bound unto the County Commissioners of the County of Jefferson and State of Nebraska for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of the East half of said county, formerly known as the County of Jones in the penal sum of five thousand dollars for the payment of which I bind myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns firmly by these presents signed with my hand and sealed with seal and dated at Fairbury in said County and State aforesaid, this second day of November AD. 1870.

The condition of the above obligation is such that the said Commissioners of said County have this day agreed to and with the said J. B. Mattingly from and after this date to hold Commissioners Court and to transact all other county business that may properly come before said Commissioners Court in the town of Fairbury in said County and State and to use all their influence as such Commissioners to permanently locate the County seat of Jefferson County at the town of Fairbury in said County. Then in consideration of the permanently location of the County seat at the town of Fairbury as aforesaid by a vote of the qualified voters of the East half of said Jefferson County, or by an act of the legislature of the state. Then the said J. B. Mattingly shall well and truly make or cause to be made a good and sufficient warranty deed to the following described lots or parcels of land in said town of Fairbury in said County, to wit:

All of lots in Block 6; Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 in Block 8; Lots 4, 5, 6 & 7 in Block 9; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 in Block 20; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 9, 10, 11 & 12 in Block 21; Lots 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 in Block 22; the west half of Block 25, the public square; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 in Block 35; Lots 7, 8 & 9 in Block 46; All of the lots in Block 48.

Provided if any of the above lots described should prove to have been sold prior to the date of this instrument then, the said J. B. Mattingly hereby agrees to replace to the County therefore an equal number of lots of equal value.

Also the five acres of land out of the west half of the southeast quarter of section 15 in township number two north of Range number two East of the sixth Principal Meridian and adjoining the present town of Fairbury aforesaid, the said five acres of land now being subject to a certain mortgage made to W. J. McDowell, then this obligation to be null and void and otherwise in full force.

(signed) J. B. Mattingly

Recorded Jan. 23, 1871.

B. T. Ryburn also signed Nov. 3, 1870, an article of agreement reading about like the above for \$1,000 and giving: "Five acres of land lying in a square body out of the Northwest corner of the Northwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of section 23 in Township 2 North of Range 2 East adjoining the town site of Fairbury aforesaid."

(signed) Byrd T. Ryburn

Recorded Jan. 23, 1871.

John Mc T. Gibson also signed such an article of agreement for \$1,000 Dec 6, 1870, giving "two and a half acres of land lying in a parallelogram five rods wide and eighty rods long in and of the East side of the Southeast quarter of Northeast. quarter of section 15, township 2 North, Range 2 East joining on the north the town site of Fairbury.

(signed) John McT. Gibson

Recorded Dec. 6, 1870

Woodford G. McDowell was the propulsion behind making Fairbury the county seat, to spur the development of the town, to enrich his land holdings and help members of his family to put down roots in Jefferson County. By November of 1869 he had purchased over 3,000 acres of land from the government within the county, the most of it in Fairbury Precinct.

McDowell apparently turned the running of his side of the town and the handling of his land interest over to relatives who eventually came to live in Fairbury. The early deed records to town property shows the names of Nelson S. McDowell, L. C. Champlin and Joseph B. McDowell. Following is some data on the McDowells, from History of Livingston County, Illinois:

WOODFORD G. McDOWELL, attorney at law and dealer in real-estate, Fairbury; born in Scioto Co., Ohio, Feb. 3, 1818. but removed to Indiana in childhood, with his parents, who settled in Tippecanoe Co., that State, in 1828; in 1832, he came with his father and uncle and brother James, to Illinois, arriving in what is now Avoca Tp., this county, May 2; here they planted some corn and commenced other preparations for a home; but on account of the Indian troubles (Black Hawk War) they returned to their homes in Indiana the same month, where they remained until the following November, then returning with his father's

family to their former possessions in this State, where they began pioneer life. which is more fully set forth in the history of Avoca Tp. The subject of this sketch was appointed Master in Chancery by Judge T. Lyle Dickey in 1844; elected Judge of the County Court in 1859; served for fourteen years as Justice of the Peace, and owing (as the Judge says) to good luck, he was sustained, during this period, in all of his decisions in cases of appeal; has also held other minor offices; owns 320 acres of land in this county, valued at \$14,400, and 2,000 acres in Nebraska, valued at \$20,000.

His first marriage was in 1842, to Elizabeth Lane; she was born near Danville, Ill., died in October, 1866; eight children by this union, only three of whom are living--Sarah L. wife of L. C. Champlin, of Fairbury, Neb., Eliza J. (wife of O. H. Phillips, of St. Joe, Mo.), and Mary C.; lost five--Nancy A., died Sept. 24, 1845; Willis P., Aug 15, 1849, Elizabeth K., Oct 29, 1851; Orpha A.L., Oct. 28, 1854; Alice E., Aug 9, 1857.

Was again married in 1867, to Marion L. Stone, who was born in Maryland, near Washington City; she died in 1874; his marriage to his present wife, Anna C. Mitchell, took place in November of that year; her birth-place was Scioto Co., Ohio.

D.A.R. Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences

BEGINNINGS OF FAIRBURY by Joseph B. McDowell.—

In the fall of 1868 my brother, W. G. McDowell, and I started from Fairbury, Illinois, for Nebraska. Arriving at Brownville, we were compelled to take a stage for Beatrice, as the only railroad in the state was the Union Pacific.

Brownville was a little river village, and Tecumseh was the only town between Brownville and Beatrice. It probably had one hundred inhabitants. There was only one house between it and Beatrice. The trip from Brownville to Beatrice took two days with a night stop at Tecumseh. The scenery consisted of rolling prairie covered with buffalo grass, and a few trees along the banks of Rock Creek. We stopped for dinner at a house a few miles northeast of the present site of Endicott, where the Oregon trail stages changed horses.

On our arrival at Beatrice we found a little village of about three hundred inhabitants. The only hotel had three rooms: a reception room, one bedroom with four beds—one in each corner—and a combination dining room and kitchen. There was a schoolhouse fourteen by sixteen feet, but there were no churches. We bought a few town lots, entered two or three sections of land, and decided to build

a stone hotel, as there was plenty of stone along the banks of the Blue river, and in the water.

We then took a team and spring wagon and started to find a location for a county seat for Jefferson county. We found the land where Fairbury is now located was not entered, so we entered it with the intention of making it the county seat.

On our return to Beatrice we let the contract for the stone hotel, which still stands today. We returned to Illinois, but the following February of 1869 I came back to look after the building of the hotel. I bought a farm with buildings on it, and began farming and improving the land I had entered. In the summer of 1869 my brother came out again, and we drove over to lay out the county seat of Jefferson county, which we named after Fairbury, Illinois, with the sanction of the county commissioners. We shipped the machinery for a sawmill to Waterville, Kansas, and hauled it to Fairbury with teams. Judge Mattingly bought it and sawed all the lumber that was used for building, around Fairbury, Armstrong Brothers started a small store in a shack.

About 1870, I came over from Beatrice and built the first store building, on the east side of the square, which was, replaced a few years ago by the J. D. Davis building. The Fairbury Roller Mill was built in 1873 by Col. Andrew J. Cropsey. I bought his interest in 1874 and have had it ever since. In 1880 I came to make my home in Fairbury and have watched its steady growth from its beginning, to our present thriving and beautiful little city of 1915."

With his saw mill already in operation Mattingly had a large interest here on the frontier. It was only natural that he went right to work in the fall of 1868 after his agreement with McDowell, not only with action but in planning and dreaming. He built a large store house which undoubtedly became John Brown's store. In sawing lumber for others he kept a certain percent of the lumber at times for payment when there was no money to be had. With this lumber and native lumber of his own he erected buildings on lots on his side of town which he rented and sold. In September of 1870 he erected a three story building with a basement for Jackson Galbreth for a hotel. In another building J. Fitch Kinney opened a clothing store.

Mattingly remained proprietor of his sawmill but he leased the double rotary mill to Wheeler & Son in 1870. In January of 1871 he installed the necessary machinery in his steam mill to grind corn and other coarse grain. In 1872 he joined with L. C. Champlin, Freeman Servoss and L. W. Eldridge (father of Mrs. C. H. McGee of Fairbury) to form the Fairbury Mill Company for the purpose of operating a flouring mill run by water power. The company was to start October 25, 1872, and apparently was for the operation of Mattingly's mill and

undoubtedly the company dissolved when A. J. Cropsey erected his flour mill on the Little Blue river two blocks east of Mattingly.

By the time Cropsey had completed his flour mill in 1873, L.C. Champlin was in business with him. A few months later J. B. McDowell had purchased Cropsey's interest. The mill was known as the Fairbury Mills & Elevator, beginning operation in November of 1873. Mattingly and Fordyce Roper furnished the site, ten acres of land; for the flour mill for \$500, which was donated by the public.

With a lumber yard in operation in Fairbury, there was no demand for native lumber by 1874. Mattingly sold his mill in July of 1874 and it was moved to Republic County, Kansas.

McDowell lost no time in getting things started on his side of town. In 1869 he assigned thirteen lots to his son-in-law and daughter, L. C. and Sarah L. Champlin; twelve lots to his brother, Joseph B. McDowell; thirteen lots to his son-in-law and daughter, Oregon H. and Eliza J. Phillips; and three other lots to individuals living here on the frontier.

Lots were sold on time and various other ways to get folks to buy and build. D. A. Brandt was allowed to pay one dollar down and the balance of \$90 to be paid the first of November by work on school house being built in Fairbury with twelve percent interest. One lot was sold to Marvin Warren if he would build a \$500 house on it.

Nelson S. McDowell had a \$7,000 stock of goods hauled in for a general store in September of 1870. Although Fairbury had little at this time George Cross made it sound good in his newspaper. saying: "Almost a continuous line of teams are freighting lumber, hardware, dry goods and groceries into Fairbury." Also: "Scarcely a week passes but one, two or three and sometimes more buildings are erected, thus giving constant, lively and paying employment, not only to merchants and professional men, but also to mechanics and laboring men generally,"

As the village eked out its growth so did the community life develop. Fairbury was platted on an old Indian trail which was still used by the Otoe—Missouri Indians whose reservation was in the Big Blue river valley of southern Gage County and included several sections of land in southeastern Jefferson County for several years after the town was started the Indians continued to use the old trail as they came and went on their buffalo hunts, crossing through the public square. The Indians did considerable trading and begging in Fairbury.

During the first years the little settlement experienced large herds of Texas and Cherokee cattle, from 800 to 1,700 head, passing through town enroute from Abilene, Kansas, to Iowa and other locations. Prairie fires were often seen and watched from the settlement as they raced in from different directions, leaving vast belts of a black path behind them. Those sweeping in from Kansas were stopped by the Little Blue river. Settlers often suffered and were burnt out by this hazard.

Fairbury's first school house, a 22 by 40 feet wooden structure two stories high was built in block 31 on the south side of Fourth street in 1870, across from where the Mary Etta Hotel is now located. It became a social center for the area with the Baptists, Christians and Methodists taking turns holding services on different Sundays during each month. Social hops, dances and Christmas socials were held in the building with the first term of school in 1871.

The county commissioners readily took advantage of the offer to make Fairbury the county seat and moved to Fairbury to operate the county government. Apparently they had some trouble obtaining a place to hold their first Commissioners Court and to set up county offices. Their proceedings of Dec. 5, 1870, read: "Accepted petition of Ray Grayson in renting his building for county offices. He is to have the first money coming into the treasury, belonging to the County General Fund at the rate of \$16.50 per month from the 17th day of October 1870, until the 17th day of April 1871."

The promotion to divide Jefferson County into two counties was pushed in the fall of 1870 with petitions being circulated. The county at that time was twenty-four miles by forty-eight miles in size, consisting of both the present Jefferson and Thayer counties. This area in 1871 had 24,684 acres of government land subject to homestead entry but none for cash entry. Everyone believed that when the county was divided that the east half would be given it's original name, Jones, and the west half would retain the name Jefferson, which it was originally called in 1858.

D. C. Jenkins introduced a bill in the Legislature of Nebraska early in 1871 for a division of Jefferson County with the 6th principal meridian being the division line. When the settlers voted favorably for the division in 1871, the eastern part of the county became the present day Jefferson County and the western part the present day Thayer County.

Later in the year the settlers of Jefferson County voted Fairbury the County seat and on November 6, 1871, the Commissioners Court proclaimed Fairbury the county seat of Jefferson County. On January 4, 1872, the City of Fairbury was incorporated, according to Commissioners proceedings: "Petition of Charles Andrews and others for the appointment of trustees for the town of Fairbury

granted, and L. C. Champlin, C. F. Steele, George Cross, B. L. Purdy and Charles Andrews appointed as trustees."

On June 1, 1872, a contract was let for construction to build the county's first courthouse and a jail. At first they were to be constructed of wood, then later the plans were changed to erect the courthouse of brick. They had considerable trouble in getting the courthouse completed but by December 1873, it was completed and ready for occupancy. The old courthouse, twenty-four by sixty feet, two stories high still stands on lot 12, block 32, the west building on the south side of the square.

The jail project was abandoned and the two boiler iron cells and the partially erected structure were sold to Mattingly to be used in his saw mill. Fairbury was still without a jail in 1879, making it hard for law officers to handle trouble makers.

The first transportation and mail service to Fairbury was by stage coaches from Kansas and Beatrice. In 1870 the Wilson Stage Line, under the management of J. D. Wilson, ran stages from Waterville, Kansas, to Meridian in the western part of Jefferson County. The stage made two trips a week, following the road along the Little Blue river then struck the old California Road eight miles above Fairbury, making stops at Jenkins Mills, Fairbury and Meridian in Jefferson County.

The Saint Joseph & Denver City Railroad Company was organized under the laws of the State of Kansas in the year 1862, and by an Act of Congress, approved July 23, 1866, the odd sections of land for ten miles in width lying in the then Territory of Nebraska were granted to the Company to construct its Road from Marysville, Kansas, to effect a junction with the Union Pacific Railroad at a point not further than the 100th Meridian of West Longitude. The grant was accepted and the line surveyed by the Company in the years 1867 and 1863, and was located on its present route about Jan. 1st, 1867 and maps of the same duly filed in the land office of the United States, and approved by the President of the United States on the 21st day of March 1870. That by the Act the Right of Way, 200 feet wide, was granted to the company through all the Public Lands lying in the Territory of Nebraska through which the Road might pass. That at the time of the passage of the Act the lands mentioned in the petition were vacant lands belonging to the United States and were subject to said grant from that date and could not be entered of purchased except as subject to such Right of Way.

Before the above Act had been approved July 23, 1866, some of Jefferson County's first settlers were already claiming and living on land that the government had let them file on through the Land Office. Homesteading also opened Jan. 1, 1863.

The railroad made a permanent survey through Jefferson County in November of 1870. A final survey was made in 1872 at which time it went through the public square, according to the Fairbury Gazette.

At this time W. G. McDowell came to Fairbury to spend three weeks,

The St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad gradually made its way up the Little Blue Valley from Kansas. For some reason the rails were not laid across the public square but were run through Mattingly's side of town, missing the square one-half to one block as it is today. The first train arrived in Fairbury at noon March 13, 1872. The Kansas and Nebraska stage made its final trip March 23, 1873.

The railroad had no depot in Fairbury and at the beginning all freight had to be delivered direct from the car. By May a depot site was chosen on the south edge of town, lots one and two in block 45. The depot went up fast, a building twenty by fifty feet with platforms extending on all sides, was completed in June. W. S. Hubble ran a hack between town and the depot.

The railroad was a boom to the frontier settlement, bringing the eastern markets to this wilderness and making Fairbury a shipping point for a large scope of new country to the west and southwest.

W. G. McDowell took it upon himself to have a new map of the plat of Fairbury made and filed in 1873. In the Commissioners Court proceedings for July 7, 1873 is recorded:

"Whereas the original town plat of the town of Fairbury on file in the clerks office is so nearly obliterated and destroyed, that the lots, streets and alleys, cannot be distinguished. Thereby leaving the records of said town vague, and uncertain, and liable to cause trouble, and litigation.

Therefore, be it resolved that the town plat of Fairbury including all additions up to date as appears on plat here with, shall be considered a true and legal plat of said town.

And it is hereby ordered that the above resolution together with the said plat be placed on the records of Jefferson County.

(signed) T. J. Holt, Chairman Board County Commissioners."

The new plat was recorded in the county records Oct. 25, 1873. Recorded with the plat is the following:

"County of Jefferson, State of Nebraska, July 8th, 1873. I hereby certify that I have made a full and complete survey as follows and in accordance with the above Plat: Blocks 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and east half of Blocks 4, 11 and 18 of the Original Town of Fairbury; all of McDowell's 1st addition to Fairbury and the Subdivision of the Southwest Quarter of Northwest quarter of Section fourteen of town two North of Base line of Range Two East of Sixth Principal Meridian.

(signed) A. R. Buttolph, County Surveyor.

"To All whom it may concern. Know Ye that I, W. G. McDowell, of Fairbury in the County of Livingston, and State of Illinois, have caused the town of Fairbury, Jefferson Co., Neb., to be surveyed and staked out, according to the foregoing Plat, on the South West quarter of Sec. 14 Town 2 N. Range 2 E. of the 6 P.M. and donated the Streets and Alleys as therein shown.

This Plat being made for the special purpose of explaining the former record of said Town of Fairbury and showing W. G. McDowell's 1st Addition to the town of Fairbury and also of showing W. G. McDowell's Sub-Division of the SW 1/4 of the N W 3/4 of Sec 14, Town 2 Range 2 E into 12 blocks numbering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 as shown by said Plat (signed) W. G. McDowell, Proprietor."

To really tell the true story of Fairbury would require the whole history of Jefferson County. Fairbury was promoted for financial gain and the merchants prospered from the trade of those pioneer settlers, squatters and overland immigrants flocking into the county. The railroad moved supplies in much faster and easier than did wagons and teams and settlers made Fairbury their trading post rather than drive to the Missouri river towns as they had in the past. The railroad brought the eastern markets to this frontier.

George Cross was brought to this frontier to help promote and favor McDowell's project but this pioneer newspaper man foresaw the destiny of Fairbury and made a declaration in his newspaper, the Fairbury Gazette, in 1874. It pertained to the fact that the citizens of the town were failing in not making an effort to secure manufacturing interests, avowing: "This may prove a fatal policy,"

CHAPTER 13

Summary

Mysteries

Whenever historical research is performed, there are always mysteries that are encountered.

One mystery is the number of churches and their disposition at Avoca. Conflicting information indicates there were probably three different successive churches at Avoca between 1857 and 1935. Further research is required to confirm the build date for the second church.

Another mystery is what happened to the Moore family cemetery mentioned in the 1878 history book. The author has been unable to determine where this cemetery is located today, or if the bodies were moved to another location.

Another question is whether or not Judge Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904) acted improperly with respect to his dealings with Chatsworth pioneer Franklin Oliver. His fellow Judge Payson from Pontiac was found to have acted improperly by the Illinois Supreme Court in 1896 with respect to how he acquired 1,200 acres of farm land from Franklin Oliver. Judge Payson paid only \$4,400 for 1,200 acres of land worth \$60,000.

No law suits could be found that were filed against Judge McDowell by the heirs of Franklin Oliver. No published accounts of improprieties by Judge McDowell could be found.

Alma Lewis James reported in her book that both Judge Payson's and Judge McDowell's reputation were tarnished badly because the public perceived they tried to take advantage of a senile Franklin Oliver. She asserts that both Judges had to leave their respective towns and move to Washington, D.C.

No historical information could be found that supports Alma Lewis James' claim that Judge McDowell's reputation was severely tarnished and that he had to leave Fairbury and go to Washington, DC. Judge McDowell's wife had relatives in the Washington, DC area. The Judge and his wife traveled back and forth from Fairbury to Washington, DC many times before they finally moved there.

Fairbury, Nebraska

Judge Woodford G. McDowell (1818-1904) was a very astute businessman. He witnessed first-hand what happened to the village of Avoca when the railroad came through and Fairbury was founded in 1857. The village of Avoca shut down, and some of the houses were moved to the new town of Fairbury. Patton's farm land increased many times in value as it was converted to Fairbury city lots. He also witnessed the positive impact on Pontiac when it was designated the county seat of Livingston County.

The Judge realized a lot of money could be made if this experience could be repeated in Nebraska. He personally scouted the land in Nebraska, to try to figure out where their new railroad would be installed. Furthermore, he tried to pick a new town location that was likely to become the county seat.

The Judge's predictions both turned out to be correct. The railroad came through where he predicted, and his new town location was situated where it would also become the county

seat. The Judge's land increased many times in value as it was converted from farm land to Fairbury, Nebraska, city lots.

Legacy

Through their pioneering efforts, the McDowell family helped to tame the wilderness in Central Illinois and in Jefferson County, Nebraska. They helped to found and develop the Illinois towns of Avoca, McDowell, Fairbury, and Gibson City. They also helped to name and establish Fairbury, Nebraska.

Fairbury, Illinois has greatly benefited from the generosity of the McDowell family. The Floyd & Marion Stafford Pool, North Park, and the Echoes Museum are all amenities that were funded through the generosity of the McDowell family.

Several homes originally built by the McDowells still stand today in Fairbury. These include the Churchill home and Woodford G. McDowell home on Maple street.

It is hoped this book helps readers to better understand the critical roles the McDowell family members played in the history of Central Illinois and Jefferson County Nebraska.

References

All references used in this story were identified at the point they were used in the story.

Recommended Reading

Stuffed Clubs and Antimacassars by Alma Lewis James.

Nicks from the Blade by Alma Lewis James.

Fairbury, Illinois in the Civil War by Dale C. Maley

History of Murders Committed in Fairbury, Illinois by Dale C. Maley

Fairbury, Illinois, from Prehistoric to Modern Times by Dale C. Maley

Websites

Echoes Museum, Fairbury, Illinois

Other Sources of Information

None

Author Spotlight



Dale C. Maley

Dale C. Maley is the author of the book ***Index Mutual Funds: How to Simplify Your Financial Life and Beat the Pros.*** He was also a contributing author to Chapter 18 in the 2009 book ***The Bogleheads Guide to Retirement Planning.*** Dale is a very successful private investor who has been a student of Financial Planning and Investing for over 33 years.

He was trained as an engineer at the University of Illinois and has been a practicing engineer for 36 years. His accomplishments as an engineer include the granting of 16 U.S. Patents and authorship of over 535 professional technical papers. He is also a member of the International Society of Automotive Engineers and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

Dale earned an MBA (Masters Degree in Business Administration) degree from Illinois State University. Dale became a Registered Financial Advisor in the State of Illinois in 2006. He

works part-time as a fee-only financial planner. He is President of Maley Financial Planning.

One of Dale's hobbies is history, including the history of Fairbury, Illinois. He has given many lectures to local Fairbury community groups about the history of Fairbury. Dale is on the Board of Directors for the Fairbury Echoes Museum and Livingston County Historical Society. Both Dale and his wife are 5th generation citizens of Fairbury.

Also by Dale C. Maley

Fairbury History Books

- History of Murders Committed in Fairbury, Illinois
- Fairbury, Illinois Book Authors
- Fairbury, Illinois in 1888
- Fairbury, Illinois and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition
- Fairbury, Illinois History Stories
- Coal Mining in Fairbury, Illinois
- William T. Stackpole of Fairbury, Illinois
- Livingston County Historical Society: It's Beginning and Some Later Updates
- William T. Stackpole's 1849 Journey from Illinois to the California Gold Fields
- Fairbury, Illinois, from Prehistoric Times to Modern Times

Woodworking Books

- How to Build a Fascinating Ratcheting Wood Model
- How to Make a Simple Hopping Bunny Rabbit Pull-Toy

Investing Books

- Index Mutual Funds: How to Simplify Your Financial Life and Beat the Pro's
- How Asset Allocation Can Help You Achieve Your Financial Goals
- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers about ETF's and Index Funds
- Why We Don't Save Enough for Retirement and How You Can Save More
- Are You Using the Right Rules to Plan Your Retirement?
- How to Use Psychology to Achieve Your Financial Goals
- Should Immediate Annuities Be a Tool in Your Retirement Planning Toolbox?
- Who Wins the Variable Annuity Versus Mutual Fund Battle?
- Will Your Children or Uncle Sam Inherit Your Estate?
- What Are the Requirements for Becoming a Financial Planner?
- Sell My Stocks Before the Baby Boomers Crash the Market?
- How Do I Determine If I Have Saved Enough to Retire?
- Don't Max Out My 401K?
- Will Reverse Mortgages Be the Salvation of Baby Boomer Retirees?
- Do I Need Ten, Twenty, or Thirty Times My Income to Retire?

- How to Find a Good Financial Planner
- Total Market or Slice-n-Dice for My Investment Portfolio?
- What Safety Factor Are You Using for Your Retirement Plan?
- How Much Income Do I Really Need in Retirement?
- What Lessons Can We Learn from the Crash of 2008?
- How to Invest for Retirement after the Crash of 2008
- Rules-of-thumb or Retirement Planning Software?
- Is Portfolio Rebalancing Worth It?
- Do I Need Umbrella Insurance?
- Got My First Job and How Do I Handle the 401K?
- Are Black Swans Really Harmful to Ordinary Investors?
- Should My Asset Allocation Include My Pension and Social Security?
- Should I Pay Off My Mortgage Early?
- How Does My Asset Allocation Compare to Everyone Else?
- How Do I Maximize Retirement Income From My Portfolio?
- Is Saving 10% of My Gross Income Good Enough?
- Contribute to My Bad 401K or Go Taxable?

- Do I Need an Investment Policy Statement?
- Do I Need Long-Term Care Insurance?
- Do I Need Long-Term Disability Insurance?
- How to Read Your Way to Financial Wealth
- How Do I Select the Correct Risk Level for My Portfolio?
- How Do I Estimate Retirement Living Expenses?